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DISCOURSE

ON

INFANT BAPTISM.

BY THE REV. JAMES REID.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY ARMOUR AND RAMSAY,
SAINT PAUL STREET.

1841.

No.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
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RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE JEHOSEPHAT, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

MY LORD,

This little book, having for its object to promote the best interests of the younger part of our flocks, by calling the serious attention of all parents, belonging to our communion, to improve the privileges which our Heavenly Father has, from ancient times, graciously vouchsafed to our children, but which are, in our degenerate age, very much neglected, I have hereby, with much diffidence, taken the liberty of inscribing to your Lordship. I have not, indeed, my Lord, the presumption to think that it is a tribute worthy of your approbation; only I feel assured, from your known candour and kindness, that, to meet with a favourable reception at your hands, it is not indispensable that it should come up to your Lordship's distinguished attainments, if, in its humble endeavours to do good, it will be found to have proceeded from well-meant intentions.

Remembering that it is a very important part of your Lordship's functions to visit the Churches, under your Episcopal jurisdiction, at successive periods, for the purpose of administering the apostolic rite of confirmation to the young, and to stir them up to a life of religion, piety, and virtue, in pursuance of their baptismal vows which they then take upon themselves; and that, in the performance of these your solemnly-affecting Episcopal duties, so remarkably identifying the chief shepherd of the flock with the endearing character of a father, addressing, admonishing, and instructing his spiritual children, I felt very desirous, though it is without your permission, to dedicate to your Lordship this humble attempt of following up the instructions which your Lordship gave to the youth of my charge, as well at the last as on former confirmations.

Your Lordship is in the habit of taking such particular pains in explaining the nature of the Baptismal Covenant, and the obligations to obedience

which arise therefrom, with so much godly zeal and kindness of manner as cannot but recommend the religion of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

To your Lordship, therefore, I send this Discourse; and happy shall deem myself, if you do not think it altogether unworthy of your acceptance.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's very obedient and obliged servant,

JAMES REID.

St. Armand East, 2d November, 1840.

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P R E F A C E .

THE writer of the following pages has not the vanity to presume, that the Antipedo-Baptists will be induced to change their sentiments and their practice, on the subject of Infant Baptism, merely by the force of any thing they are to read in these sheets. They have repeatedly withstood the force of much better treatises. His efforts are, therefore, not so much directed to influence them, as to furnish the members of his own communion with a few arguments and proofs from the Holy Scriptures, in support of what they believe and practice, as a divine ordinance.

To our Antipedo-Baptist brethren I frankly and cordially allow as much liberty to express their sentiments as I claim myself. They state and publish their views freely and boldly, in regard both to the sentiments which they hold and the practice which they follow, and are never at a loss to give their opinion of our principles and practice. To this I have no manner of objection. All I ask is, that they allow me the same privilege.

Now, according to them the Abrahamic Covenant embraced only carnal ordinances and carnal promises, having no more respect to the Gospel Dispensation than as mere carnal types, much in the same way as the Land of Canaan was a type of the heavenly inheritance; that the Greek words *Baptismos* and *Baptizo* have but one unvaried meaning, which they aver is immersion; that the baptism of infants is a human device, founded on human tradition, and, therefore, so far from being of any use, that it is only a corruption of a solemn Gospel ordinance. They urge these views with indefatigable industry and perseverance. But so far as they have been successful, in the propagation of these their peculiar tenets, the writer of these pages conscientiously believes that they have so far nullified the covenant of grace.

Believing that the subject is of great importance, and that error at the threshold of Christianity, which is Baptism, must have a fatal influence on all the articles of our faith, I have honestly and faithfully made my appeal to the Holy Scriptures for information on the subject of Baptism. To them have appealed, with, I trust, sincere prayer to the Father of Lights for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, without reference to fallible controversialists, as the sole ground and authority of this, and every ordinance, which lays claim to a divine institution

Like every other writer, flattering himself that he has not been labouring in vain, I am not without hopes of being useful to some who are sincerely and honestly endeavouring to seek and to find the truth:—"If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."—St. John vii, 17: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."—St. John x, 27. That I have written in the spirit of candour and charity, and have used no argument that may justly be liable to the charge of unfairness, it does not become me to pronounce. If I know my own heart, it was my aim and desire to write as one that must render an account to a Righteous Judge. What I conceive to be error in doctrine or practice I think I should have a right to condemn as well as to avoid. It is because we condemn anything to be an error that we avoid it. But of Christian men it is not my province to judge. We are all sinful, fallible, and, therefore, liable to error. God, for Christ's sake, is patient and long-suffering with all his children, and therefore our brotherly love should extend to all who are followers of Jesus Christ, though they may not follow him in every step we deem to be necessary. To his own master every one must stand or fall.

Having no expectation of being remunerated by the sale of this little book, I was obliged to study brevity, that I might, at such expense as my circumstances can afford, be able to put into the hands of our own people an antidote against the influence which is in continual exercise to take away what I believe to be an ordinance of God.

"What is the use of baptizing infants?" The question is frequently asked, as if any thing like a scriptural or rational answer to it was an impossibility. Infants, they say, cannot believe. We know they cannot; but neither can the objector himself, without the grace of God. It is of no use to baptise infants, they say; and, if so, they ought to inform us what the benefits are which the Church of God has derived from their rejection. It is very certain that the Jewish Church was encumbered with infants. On the principles of our Antipædo-Baptist brethren, the Christian Church is now relieved from the burden. From being the tender mother of children, she is now changed into a cruel ostrich in the wilderness, "which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them."—Lam. iv, 5; Job xxxix, 14, 15. The refusal of baptism to our children, I believe, is in opposition to the prayer which our Saviour taught us to use every day through life: "Thy kingdom come." If we keep our children from baptism, we keep them from his "kingdom," and have no desire that his "kingdom" should extend its privileges and blessings unto them.

Much is said, and much is printed about the conversion of the world; but if ever the world shall be converted, those who are called Christians must

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begin to allow their children the enjoyment and benefits of their own divine privileges, and bring them up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," and not as the children of heathens or infidels, left to their own choice. As matters are now conducted, the children are left out of the Church, as tender, helpless lambs outside of the fold, to be torn and devoured by ravenous beasts. They are left to themselves, in the belief that they have nothing to do with a Gospel ordinance, or a Gospel ordinance with them, until it shall please God to convert them after they have come to the years of maturity. While thus wandering outside of the fold of Christ, purposely and systematically let loose, until they arrive at full stature, not only in body, but also in sin, the preacher is sent to reclaim and to convert them. When they should have been retained within the fold, and carefully guarded and protected, or skilfully tended, as precious shoots of the vine in the Lord's vineyard, they are cast over the hedge; but when they are wanted by the unfaithful shepherds, or the careless vinedresser, they are found to have become wolves, or branches of the "wild olive," and, in most cases, too wild for instruction, or too stiff and dry for grafting.

In order to awaken parents to a sense of their duty and solemn obligations, I have endeavoured to shew that children were always, from the beginning of the world, included in every covenant which God made with their parents; and that from the time of Abraham, in particular, a course of instruction adapted to the case of children has ever been in force and practised, on the ground that they were truly within the purview of the covenant, and, as such, to be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." The whole has been written in the simplicity of my heart, and according to my conscientious belief. If I am mistaken, the mistake is an error of judgment, not of my will. For the truth I have diligently searched as for hidden treasure. The applause of men is nothing to me, who have arrived far into the vale of declining years. Error may please for a time; but truth alone is that which will stand the test at last, and "maketh not ashamed."

When compelled to differ from others—from men more wise, and holy, and learned than myself, and to set forth what I believe to be the will of God, in opposition, I trust I have made it my study to wound their Christian feelings as little as possible. Some expressions may have escaped me that a little more reflection might have mended; but I am not aware that I could have opposed a system, and set up a contrary one in a less offensive manner than I have done.

There are many Antipedo-Baptists whom I respect very highly for their piety, learning, and zeal, and, therefore, I do not wish to be considered as attacking them, either as a body or as individuals, but only on one point. On that point they, as a whole, attack us. They cannot, then, if they are

disposed to give us *fair play*, which I do not doubt they are, deny us the privilege of being "ready," if so inclined "always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." This I have endeavoured to do. If I have failed, it is not for want of materials to defend a good cause, and to render a good answer, but from lack of ability to use them aright. The merits of the case, however, should not be determined by the abilities of a weak advocate. There are yet giants in theology; but as for me, I cannot bring them to the Lord's treasury any thing more worthy than such as I have done; and here it is.

After this Discourse had been prepared for the press, an eminent Christian friend kindly favoured me with a loan of Wall's History of Baptism. To this unexpected favour I am indebted for so many valuable quotations from the Fathers on the subject of Infant Baptism, shewing most clearly and decisively what the Church believed and how she acted from the beginning of Christianity, and through all ages since, until modern innovations have made strenuous exertions to turn over the lambs of the flock to the heathen and the infidel.

That this treatise may, through the blessing of Him who said "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," prove a blessing to the souls of men both parents and children, is the earnest prayer of the author.

St. Armand, 2d November, 1840.

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A DISCOURSE ON INFANT BAPTISM.

CHAP. I.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, ITS TERMS, AND PROVISIONS INVESTI-
GATED, WITH A VIEW TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE CHILDREN OF
CHRISTIANS, LIKE THOSE OF THE ANCIENT PEOPLE OF GOD, ARE
WITHIN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

It will not be disputed, I presume, that the New Testa-
ment is the fulfilment of the Old. If it is so, it must be
very obvious, that in order to understand the former we
must study the latter.

In the Old Testament we read that God conde-
scended to enter into a covenant with Abraham; that he
renewed the same to his son and grandson; and that the
covenants into which it pleased him to enter did not em-
brace them as solitary, disconnected individuals, but as
federal heads of nations.

The space which this Discourse is intended to oc-
cupy will not admit of large explanations, and on that
account I will endeavour to compress as much as I can
within small bounds. To the law and to the testimony
of God I desire to appeal, and not to the opinions or
suffrages of men. While I thus, I trust, humbly and
faithfully desire to sow the good seed, may the Holy Spirit
of God follow it with his blessing! Paul may plant,
and Appollos may water, but it is God alone that can
give the increase.

God made a covenant with Abraham, in which we
and our children, to the latest generations, are as
much interested as the Jews, the lineal descendants of
Abraham, ever were; for, as Christians, it is in that co-
venant we stand.

I will, at the outset, lay before the reader the very
terms and stipulations which God himself delivered from

his own mouth :—" And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in thy generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."—Gen. xvii, 7 : " And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xii, 2 : " And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xxvi, 4. This is the renewal of the covenant to Isaac, in the second generation, and was afterwards renewed to Jacob :—" And behold the Lord stood above it [namely, " the ladder set up on the earth, whose top reached to heaven," seen in the vision], and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land wherein thou liest to thee I will give it, and to thy seed ; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south ; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xxviii, 13, 14. Here is the renewal of the same covenant to the grandson, in the third generation, in the same terms as at the first. A covenant, then, was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which embraced not only their own posterity in lineal descent, and at that time unborn, but also all other nations ; for, to each of them, it was expressly promised, " In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The blessing here conveyed was purely a gratuitous favour, gift, or donation, such as none could have a right to claim, whether adult or infant, but on the footing of free and unmerited grace. It was on the part of God a free gift, without any regard to merit in the recipient, because it is evident that it existed, and was declared, before the capacity of performing any part of the conditions had existed. Hence, the same covenant assumes, in the language of the Apostle, who wrote under the guidance of divine inspiration, the name of "*promise*" :—" For the *promise*, that he should be the heir of the world, was not

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to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."—Rom. iv, 13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ;—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith : and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the *promise*" made to him.—Gal. iv, 13, 14, 29. The blessings promised to Abraham, and to his spiritual seed after him in all the nations of the earth, are of the most excellent nature, including an interest in the Patriarch's God as a God, father, friend, and protector for ever :—"I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee ; in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." These gracious promises unquestionably embrace all the blessings which the Messiah brought to enrich the world ; and being in their own nature calculated to inspire the mind with a sense of gratitude, for the inestimable benefit, and a sense of deep obligations to faith and obedience, so it is not only fit but necessary that the memory of such a gracious and noble donation should be carefully preserved to all succeeding generations, by a solemn sign, token, or memorial. Accordingly, it pleased God to institute the rite of circumcision, a mark in the flesh, which was both a seal and a confirmation of the promise of temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, which were given to Abraham before he was circumcised. The sign or seal of circumcision was a perpetual declaration of the moral purity or holiness which every divine institution must be supposed to inculcate. Circumcision, in a spiritual sense, denoted a renewal of the heart into righteousness.—Rom. ii, 29. As a memorial or token, it was applied to every male child on the eighth day from its birth ; and thus, in every generation, and in every family, at the birth of every male child, the interest of that child, and of that family, both males and females, in the noble grant of the Abrahamic covenant, was, by a divine ordinance recognized and confirmed ; and also the duty and obligation arising from the grant were continually declared and taught. By this visible sign, the relation in

which the children of Israel stood towards God remained until the coming of Messias the Prince.

The seal of the covenant was applied, with great propriety, to infants, because no other manifestation was so well calculated as this to shew that it was of grace; for, if it had not been applied to the children till they had come to the years of discretion, and had given evidence of their personal piety and obedience, then their obedience or conversion would have been the condition of their interest in the covenant, and, therefore, the grant or promise would have been of works, and not of grace, contrary to the express terms of the covenant itself. Besides, it gave the most endearing consolation to parents, to think that, when they were blessed with children, God was ready to adopt them for his own, claiming them as his own from their birth, and giving them, together with the breath of life, the strongest assurance of his being the special objects of his paternal care throughout the journey of life. Surely this consideration must be viewed as an endearing obligation upon parents to bring up their children suitably to the nature of their high calling in Christ Jesus. With the first dawn of reason it should be explained to the children, that from their infancy they may be made to understand their obligation to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and to love and serve him with all their hearts.

Circumcision did not confer, but only declared the right to covenant blessings, which had been promised in the grant which was made to Abraham. The right was given or conferred by the promise; the rite of circumcision was only a declaration of the right which existed before it. All the posterity of Abraham, both males and females, had, by virtue of the promise made to him, a right, by grace, to the blessings of the covenant; and though the token, or sign, was applied to the males only, the right of the females to the covenant blessings was unquestionably recognised, because they were as much the seed of Abraham as the males.

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child, at his first entrance into the ancient Church of God. It was the first visible pledge and token of God's love, assuring him of an interest in the blessings conferred by the Abrahamic covenant. It was once administered, and never to be repeated to the same person again.

Hitherto I have confined my observations to the spiritual blessings of the covenant, and passed over those which were of a temporal nature, and peculiar to the children of Abraham, according to the flesh. To the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, the covenant contained two grants,—earthly possessions, and a spiritual inheritance : the former was a type of the latter,—circumcision was the seal or token of both. When Abraham stood before God, and received the covenant or promise, " I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, in their generations, for ever " ; " In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," he did not stand merely as a private person, stipulating for himself alone, but as the father of us all,—not only of the Jews, but also of all nations, who on their embracing of his faith should be accepted of God, and become interested in the promise which was given unto him. In this manner, Abraham was the father of many nations.

CHAR. II.

JESUS CHRIST RECOGNISED THE COVENANT WHICH GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM, AS CONTAINING THE PROMISES WHICH HE CAME FROM HEAVEN TO FULFIL. THE COMMISSION WHICH HE GAVE HIS APOSTLES TO TEACH AND BAPTISE ALL NATIONS, IS FOUNDED THEREUPON. THE APOSTLES, WHO TAUGHT AS THE HOLY GHOST GAVE THEM KNOWLEDGE AND UTTERANCE, BROUGHT FORWARD, ON ALL OCCASIONS, THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, AS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GOSPEL PROMISES AND GOSPEL PRIVILEGES; AND SHEWED THAT AS THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM, IN EVERY AGE OF THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION, WERE ADMITTED TO THE PRIVILEGES OF THE COVENANT, SO THE CHILDREN OF CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO BE ADMITTED UNDER THE GOSPEL.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ declared and confirmed the same covenant of grace to his Apostles, in which, according to its true meaning and tenor, both they and all Christians were, and are, without exception, interested; for, whenever the salvation of (God, or the Messiah's kingdom, is said to be promised, or to be extended, to all nations, reference, undoubtedly, is made, expressed, or implied, to the covenant which was made with Abraham. There is no other foundation for this promise in any part of the Holy Scriptures but the Abrahamic covenant:—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession."—Psalm ii. 8. There are many promises of this kind in the Old Testament, respecting the calling of the Gentiles, which, from their being so well known, I need not cite, and which, one and all, are founded on the Abrahamic covenant; they are thickly scattered in the Bible, as the stars in the heavens in a clear night. By virtue of them we, as Christians, have been called to the knowledge of the true God, and of his son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The covenant made with Abraham was confirmed or ratified of God in Christ:—"And this I say, that the cove-

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nant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."—Gal. iii. 17. The covenant of which the Apostle here speaks, is, undoubtedly, the covenant which was made with Abraham, as appears very plainly from verse 14th:—"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith."

I have stated that all the Jewish males were received into the covenant in their infancy, by a sensible sign, token, or seal, distinguished by the name of circumcision. Being an ordinance of God, it followed, as a necessary consequence, that those who refused to comply with it, were cut off from the congregation of the Lord. The right and obligation to receive it stood in the commandment of God. Refusal, therefore, was rebellion against the Most High, and a renunciation of the blessing that was promised.

The very same covenant exists now in full force, and will remain so for ever, as the ground of the Christian's faith. The right of our children, therefore, to be recognized by it, is antecedent to their birth, because it is not of works, but of grace. If it were to be waited for until they come to the years of discretion, then, on every rule of sound reasoning, it would have been of works. It is on this ground that the Apostle St. Peter says, in his first sermon, after the descent of the Holy Ghost on the "glorious company of the Apostles," "for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off."—Acts ii. 39.

We may now see from the Holy Scriptures that the children of Christians are as much within the scope and provisions of the covenant as the children of Abraham, according to the flesh, were, while the Jews were in their glory. Refusing, therefore, to put on them the seal of the covenant is to reject the covenant itself; for, when we refuse to dedicate our children to God in baptism,—the initiating ordinance of the Christian Church, as circumcision was that of the Jewish,—what is it but to refuse the salvation of the Gospel? God commanded that the children

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of his people should bear upon them a sign or token that they were his. The ancient sign was laid aside when the Gospel kingdom was established ; but, in its place is substituted baptism, as the sign and seal of the new covenant, as published and confirmed by Jesus Christ :—"Go ye," says Christ, "and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—St. Math. xxviii. 19. The command which Jesus Christ here gave to his Apostles, is no more than a commission to carry the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to all the nations, or families, of the earth, according to its original design, into full effect. On this grant, it is that our children are recognized as within the scope of the covenant, and entitled to Christian instruction :—"I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, in their generations, for ever." This was the authority on which St. Peter spoke, when he said, "For the promise is unto you and to your children."

O believer ! think what you do when you take one part of the promise, and leave the other ;—when you take what you deem your own part, on the ground that you have embraced the faith of Christ, but exclude your child, because he is incapable of faith and repentance. Has God laid down this condition on which you insist ? If he has in one thing, does it not follow that he has laid it down in another case of greater importance ; whence, it must be evident, that if, for lack of faith and repentance, the child cannot be received into the kingdom of Christ on earth, he cannot, for the same reason, be received into the kingdom of heaven. This one argument conclusively shews that the Antipedo-Baptist doctrine logically involves the damnation of infants that die before they have sinned after the "similitude of Adam's transgression." If God had insisted on faith and repentance in all cases, do you think that he would have said in the original charter of our salvation "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, in their generations, for ever" ? Do you think that the Apostle, newly filled with the Holy Ghost, would, on the conditions you lay down, have said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children" ? If the children are not included in the cove-

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nant,—if they are not received by the King and Head of the Church as well as you, when you embrace the faith, on what ground does the inspired Apostle refer to them as all? Referring to them in express terms, as if they were as much the subjects of the promise as their believing parents, and, at the same time, if you teach the truth as it is in Jesus, allowing them no interest in the covenant or promise, is a most extraordinary way of acting, certainly what we should not have expected from an inspired Apostle of Jesus Christ; for, if what you speak concerning the right of infants to the baptism of Christ be true, you make the Apostle, while speaking as the Holy Ghost gave him knowledge and utterance, to pour out flattering words to the ear, but a stern refusal to those who took him at his words. But you take the promise to yourself. When you deny to your child, can you give any good reason for presuming to apply it to yourself? To any unprejudiced reader, it must be very obvious that he who gave it to the parent, gave it also to the child at the same time. Both, then, must stand or fall together :—"The promise" of the covenant "is to you and to your children," as much and as directly to the one as to the other. As truth is consistent with itself in all things, so error, however small, affects not only principles, but moral conduct. Hence, though you deny your child all visible participation in the promise, yet, if he die, the dear little angel will surely go to heaven. Very wonderful charity, indeed! The child must have nothing to do with the promise of God's covenant while he is here; he must not bear a token to signify that you would have God for his father; but when he is no longer left under your control, you think that God, as a matter of course, will receive him to his kingdom above. True, he is not good enough to participate in ordinances which you presume to control; but it seems he is good enough for heaven. That God, in his mercy and goodness, takes care of those who die in infancy I have no manner of doubt; but, whatever be their state, no thanks are due to those who turn them out of Christ's fold, and leave them, in opposition to God's holy will, on the footing of Heathens and Mahomedans.

If your children were now, under the gospel dispensation, excluded, the covenant which God made with Abraham would, most certainly, be disannulled with regard to them. God would not be the God of his seed, in their generations, for ever, as he promised he would be; or, if they have no participation in the covenant with their parents, they are not so well off since the advent of the promised Messiah as the Hebrew children were before his coming; and so the Church of God, instead of being a gainer, is a loser, so far as children are concerned. Of this, however, there is not the least hint either in the Gospels or in the Epistles of the New Testament. Had Jesus Christ excluded them, we may rest assured that the Jews of his time, his most bitter enemies, would have raised the loudest clamour against him, if they had the smallest intimation or suspicion that he was paving the way, openly or covertly, for the exclusion of their children from their ancient privileges. That he did nothing—said nothing to exclude them, the universal silence of the New Testament, and of all antiquity, is a standing proof.

If our children have been excluded from the privileges of the covenant, the deed of exclusion must, somewhere, in the New Testament, be found on record. But can any such deed be found? Until the Advent of Messiah, the children of believing parents were, undeniably, within the scope of the covenant, and entitled,—nay, required—to bear its token or seal. The covenant was not only confirmed by Jesus Christ, but also adopted by him as his own, as the ground on which he commissioned his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all the nations of the earth. It was, and is the same covenant of grace, as well under the old, as under the new dispensation, and was the ground on which the Apostle rested his authority, when he said that “the promise is unto you, and to your children.”

It is not necessary for me to shew an express command on the pages of the New Testament, for the admission of children to the sacrament of baptism, because it has been proved, that until the coming of Jesus Christ they were

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within the embrace of the covenant, and entitled to participate in religious privileges; but if they are now excluded, as our Antipedo-Baptists say they are, they are bound to produce the deed of exclusion. They must produce an express command, delivered by Him who asserted his authority as equal to that which delivered the ten commandments to Moses, engraved on two tables of stone by the finger of God. To effect so great a change in the dispensations of God, as the exclusion of children from their ancient rights, neither inference nor assertion can be admitted as proof. Nothing short of an express command in plain terms can give satisfaction. Now, after a controversy on this subject kept up in constant agitation for more than two centuries, has such a command ever been produced? No, and never will. Indeed, if it had been the design of our merciful Saviour to cut off the children from their ancient privileges, he certainly would have been as explicit on that subject as on any other. But since he has said nothing from which their exclusion can even be inferred, it is clear as day, that their rights remain to this hour unimpaired by him. The silence of the New Testament, then, even if admitted, which is by no means done, is in favour of, and not in opposition to, the baptism of infants; for, if the Gospel had excluded them, is it credible, or even possible, that the silence of the grave would have reigned throughout all the pages of the New Testament on a subject of such vast importance? Is it credible that not one of the Evangelists should have mentioned the fact? Who can believe that the Jews, who had for ages been familiar with the high and noble privileges which their children enjoyed, would not have remonstrated and clamoured against the innovation? Had there been the least cause for complaint, they would not have been driven, as they were, to have false witnesses, in order to put the gilding of pious zeal on their murderous deeds, when they arraigned our Saviour before the Roman judge. Would they have been silent respecting the exclusion of their children, if they had had any suspicion that they were to be excluded? They would have moved heaven and earth to draw down vengeance on the head of the daring inno-

vator. There is not, however, one solitary sound of complaint on this head in all the New Testament. The unbelieving Jews are silent. The converted Jews are silent. The Council whose decrees are recorded in Acts xv. is silent. All from the beginning of St. Matthew to the end of Revelations are totally silent. What is the meaning of this universal silence? It admits of only one solution. The admission of children into the Gospel covenant with their parents was never denied, doubted, or questioned, till many centuries had elapsed after the inspired writers of the New Testament had been in their graves. The question, then, is not—Shew me a precept for the baptism of infants? but rather—Shew me the deed of their exclusion from baptism? Shew me when, and by whose authority they were excluded? Name the place where they were first turned out of the fold, as lambs, to be devoured by wild beasts? Point out, the law, chapter, and verse, which in express terms has shut them out from their ancient privileges? If they have been excluded, as our Antipedo-Baptist brethren maintain they are, they are bound to shew us the law that has excluded them. We have shewn by express scripture authority that infants were a component part of the Church of God, admitted by the Almighty himself, and that his admittance of them was the grounds of the promise made "unto you and to your children," and, consequently, a demonstrative proof that they do still, by the gracious favour of our Heavenly Father, continue in the enjoyment of the same privilege under the Gospel. If they have been excluded, I demand again that our Antipedo-Baptist brethren are bound to shew the enactment which has repealed their admission. Will they condescend to do this? They never have done it yet; and if we may reason from what they have done, we need not expect any other answer than that which they have repeatedly given,—bare assertion. But, until they shew us the express precepts of exclusion, we must remain in the belief that none is ready at their hand, and that their practice, instead of promoting religion, is desolating to the Church of God, and maketh his covenant of "nause effect."

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CHAP. III.

THE COMMISSION WHICH JESUS CHRIST GAVE TO HIS APOSTLES, AND BY VIRTUE OF WHICH THE GOSPEL IS YET PREACHED IN THE WORLD, IS, IN EFFECT, A RE-PUBLICATION OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, AND, HENCE, IF IT HAD RESPECT TO CHILDREN THEN, IT HAS THE SAME EFFECT STILL. HOW THE APOSTLES UNDERSTOOD THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION.

THE commission which Jesus Christ gave to his Apostles, in these words, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost," was intended by our Lord to give full effect to the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant. Compare the two together, and then judge:—"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."—Gen. xvii. 7: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xlii. 8—xx. 18. The commission which Jesus Christ gave his Apostles, is, in effect, a republication of the Abrahamic covenant. That covenant was given to the Patriarch's seed, as well as to himself. It included the believing Gentiles as well as his natural posterity. That there might be no pretext for confining the promise to the Jews, Abraham was constituted the federal head, or father of the faithful, of all nations. In the terms which convey the Gospel commission, neither Jesus Christ nor his Apostles, at any time or place, gave the least intimation that the privileges of the covenant had been abridged or abrogated, only,—instead of the sign of circumcision, the token of the Abrahamic covenant,—baptism was substituted, which did not either, with respect to matter or parties interested, affect the ground or promise of the covenant, but merely the token, memorial, or seal. Therefore, when Jesus gave his commission which commanded to teach, or make disciples of all nations, he did, in effect,

command the blessings of the covenant to be extended according to the original designs of that noble grant. And the blessings which it conveyed, together with the token of them, were granted as well to the children as the parents. The Apostles, being Jews, would not otherwise have understood the terms of their commission; for they and all the Jews had always, by virtue of the divine command, considered children as embraced, together with their parents, in the covenant, and, therefore, entitled to the token. That such was their understanding is manifest from the following portion of the first sermon that was delivered by any of them after receiving the Gospel commission, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost:—"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children, and all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—Acts ii. 38, 39. The Abrahamic covenant embraced "all nations"—"all the families of the earth"; so does this speech of St. Peter, and, thence, I infer that his doctrine was the same as that of the covenant. In verse 41, we are informed, that when the people heard the Apostles' discourse, and "received this word," they "were baptized." Is there any thing here that looks like a receiving of the parents alone, while their children were left out? The uniform custom which prevailed among the Jews, sanctioned,—nay enjoined,—by the Almighty himself, ever since the time of Abraham, was to have their children with them on every solemn occasion.—Deut. xii. 12; xvi. 11; xxxi. 12. How, then, with the veneration in which their religious privileges were held by them, would they have felt, had their children been neglected when they were admitted to receive the knowledge of salvation, through faith in the long-expected Messiah? Is it any ways probable that such a neglect would have passed over in silence? Here, it is obvious that the promise was announced to the children as much as to the parents. Who, then, will have the hardihood to affirm that the children were not baptized? The language of the Apostle certainly excludes none but unbelievers and impenitent sinners. They that

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believed, and gladly received the word, separated themselves from the impenitent, and were baptized to the number of three thousand souls. This language does not exclude children—only the impenitent. This being the first sermon that was preached after the divine commission was issued by our Lord, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, the proceedings of the inspired preachers ought surely to pass for a fair comment on the meaning, design, and application of their commission. In their next sermon they again refer to the Abrahamic covenant, as furnishing the ground-work of their preaching:—"Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying, unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Acts iii. 25. The Apostles referred to the Abrahamic covenant, at the opening of their commission, as containing the substance of what they were required to preach to the world. That covenant included and embraced children: it admitted them to a participation of religious privileges. By bringing it forward, in addresses made to the Jews, who knew the privileges that belonged to their children, it follows that the inspired preachers had no intention of impugning this article of the national faith; and that, therefore, their converts were allowed to hold the belief that their children, as before, were admitted into the covenant with them. The same doctrine that was preached to the Jews was likewise preached to the Gentiles; "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," says the Apostle of the Gentiles, "for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."—Rom. i. 16. Believing Gentiles, then, and their children are surely dealt with in one and the same way. One law, as of old, there is for the home-born and for the stranger. Accordingly, as we proceed in the Acts of the Apostles, we find that believers and their households were uniformly baptized. Lydia and her household were baptized: the jailor and his family, and the household of Stephanas, were baptized. We must not, however, forget that we are asked how we know that they had children in those households; to which it need only be replied, that we

know there were children at least as well as they do the contrary, when they say there were not. There might be for any thing that is known to the contrary; or there might not for any thing that we affirm; for our presuming that there were children is surely as good in evidence as their presuming there were none. But the language used is clearly in our favour, without doing any thing for them. Families and households most generally all over the world are the nurseries of children; and strange if those families baptized by the Apostles had none of those little beings that are so common in all families, rich or poor. Besides, the language itself is in obvious agreement with the command given to Abraham, to circumcise both himself and all the male children of his house. When the Apostles, then, say that they had baptized a certain man and his household, they were naturally understood by those who were intimate with the customs of the preceding dispensation as including young and old. But nothing like the Apostolic language is ever found in the narratives of our Antipedo-Baptists, when they publish their accounts of conversions either at home or abroad. No families are ever converted or baptized but solitary, disconnected individuals. Parents and children are instantly divided. Their practice, not less than their language, is at variance with the Apostolic narratives of conversion, as given by the inspired St. Luke.

Had any change been anticipated that would affect the privileges of children—privileges of long standing, and stamped with the authority of our Heavenly Father, the Apostles, as teachers of God's will, were bound to make it known in the most explicit terms. But they made no exception. They used the same mode of speaking which a long succession of ages had appropriated to the subject of children. The endearing associations connected with the privileges of their children, continually bringing to mind that God was their father, rendered the privileges which belonged to parents and their households familiar to every man, woman, and child throughout the twelve tribes of Israel. They knew that children were included in such descriptions of families, and that, therefore, infants were baptized wherever

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the baptism of infants is mentioned. This furnishes a sufficient reason why infant baptism is not more explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. It was well known and well understood that infants were included in the terms of the covenant, and, therefore, entitled to the token or seal of being the children of the covenant. That it is now disputed and rejected by many who call themselves Christians, and falling into disuse by many who profess to believe the doctrine of infant baptism, shews how little the scriptures are really and truly understood. Children were, by the express command of God, received into the Church by the visible sign of circumcision. The fathers were commanded to teach them the knowledge of the law, and of their duty, as the children of the covenant. The God of Abraham had promised to be their God. This promise stood unassailed, and unshaken, and unchanged after the Mosaic economy had given place to the Gospel; for, after the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, "the promise is [still] unto you and to your children." Where was the need, then, of a new command? It would have looked even strange had a command been given. The right of children to follow the parents was not affected: it was not questioned by any person under heaven that believed in the God of Abraham. A command, then, to baptise our children, in addition to the authority which every body knew and recognised, and no where disputed, would have been almost superfluous; but a command to exclude them is indispensable, and must be insisted on until it be shewn. "The promise," O Christian parents, "is unto you and to your children." What right have you to keep this promise from them? Do you think you can do it without being guilty of, at least, the attempt to rob God of the lambs of his flock?

CHAP. IV.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE PRIMITIVE FATHERS—JUSTIN MARTYR, IRENEUS, TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN, CYPRIAN, ST. CRYSTOSTOM, ST. AUSTIN.

AFTER my Discourse was written, a friend gave me the loan of Wall's History of Baptism, a book very scarce in this country, but of such extensive research and information as should entitle it to a place in the library of every Christian minister. By the help of this valuable book, I am enabled to shew, from the writings of the early fathers, that as children were admitted to religious privileges, under the Mosaic dispensation, so they were admitted to baptism in the primitive Church by those who certainly knew the minds and practice of the Apostles, and the authority under which they acted, as well, at least, as any of the moderns. The first that I shall produce is from the testimony of Justin Martyr, who wrote forty years after the Apostles. At that short distance of time, a man of great theological information, and reputation for sanctity, like him, could not have been mistaken in a matter of fact. He might, like other men, have misunderstood the meaning of a text of Holy Writ; but he could not, on the supposition that he was possessed of common honesty, have been mistaken with regard to whether infants were or were not baptized.

In his Apology, he says: "Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were disciplined (or made disciples to Christ) in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted." This testimony is plain and decided. Persons were made disciples to Christ in their childhood. If so, they certainly were made disciples in the time, and under the eye of the Apostles; for, observe, he wrote forty years after them, leaving some of the disciples he had in view to have been twenty and thirty years of age when the last of the Apostles died. Justin uses the very word which we meet with in our Lord's commission, namely, *makes disciples*, which is the true

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rendering of *teach*: In the Apostolic age the word was never applied but to persons admitted into Christ's kingdom, which was done by baptism. The baptised only were initiated—they only were called disciples ; and the father says that many such, of both sexes, were among those who had been made disciples in their childhood. The statement is made as matter of course, without any appearance of forethought or design, as any one would mention a common fact, that needs no corroboration, because, from its notoriety, there is no one to dispute or oppose it. The inference is natural and conclusive ; namely, that if children were baptised in their infancy, that, in the time of Justin Martyr, who wrote forty years after the Apostles, were sixty and seventy years of age, then the baptism of infants must have been practised by the Apostles. This inference must be allowed, and infants must be baptised, or Justin Martyr must be convicted of falsehoods.

Irenæus : sixty-seven years after the Apostles :—

"Therefore, as he was a master [i. e., Jesus Christ], he had also the age of a master. Not disdaining, nor going in a way above human nature ; nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind : but sanctifying every several age by the likeness that it has to him. For he came to save all persons by himself : *all*, I mean who by him *are regenerated* [renascuntur] or baptised unto God : *infants*, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons. Therefore, he went through the several ages : for infants, being made an infant, sanctifying infants : to little ones he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age ; and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness : to youths, he was a youth," &c.

This father reckons infants, as well as adults, among those that are *regenerated*. This last word was universally used in the primitive Church for those that were baptised. Our Church, in her baptismal offices, conforms to the same venerable use of the word. Not only was the word "*regeneration*" applied to "*baptism*"; but also the words "*enlightened*" and "*sanctified*" were interchanged for "*baptised*." "*Enlightened*," in this sense,

is used by Justin Martyr in a passage of his works which precedes that which I quoted. It was not without ample authority that such words were so applied in the primitive Church. The ancients thought much of baptism, the moderns very little. Our Saviour says, "except *any one* [in the original, which takes in old and young, infants and all classes enumerated by Irenæus] be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—St. John iii. 5. Regeneration, as spoken of in the New Testament, and in the language of the primitive Church, required the application of water, as well as the influence of the Holy Ghost. In modern theology the case is different: regeneration has nothing to do with water; consequently, ancient and modern regeneration are two different things. Let the reader judge which is the truest, the divine or the human—the ancient, which has divine inspiration, the word spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, for its authority, or the new, which has participated largely in modern discoveries. Irenæus distinctly says that infants were regenerated, i. e., baptised. He speaks of it as a common occurrence, which knew no opposition from any that called themselves Christians. Is it possible that this universally-respected father, who flourished only sixty-seven years after the Apostles, and therefore must have known the Apostolic doctrine and practice, would have been mistaken as to the question whether infants were, or were not baptised?

Tertullian: flourished one hundred years after the Apostles. This father was a very learned man, a keen disputant, well acquainted with the usages of the Church, but withal somewhat singular in many of his notions. Like all the other fathers, he speaks of infant baptism as common, unopposed, and undisputed, and derived from Jesus Christ and his Apostles; but singularly enough, he argues from the text, "*lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's faults,*" to persuade people that the baptism of infants should be delayed until they are grown up. Yet he says, "Whereas it is an acknowledged rule, that none can be saved without baptism, grounded especially on that sentence of our Lord, *unless one be born of water, he cannot be saved;*" and

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believing that infants could not be saved without baptism, he baptised "a dying child to save it." From the passages quoted by Wall from this father, it does not appear that his meaning is either very clear or consistent ; but, notwithstanding, his evidence respecting the practice of the Church is perfectly clear and unimpeachable. If he alone, of all the men of that age, pleaded for delay in the baptism of infants, the truth that the custom was to baptise them is not affected, but strongly confirmed.

Quotations out of Origen. This very famous father flourished one hundred and ten years after the Apostles :—

" Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason that whereas the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins, infants, also, are, by the usage of the Church, baptised : when, if there is nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

" Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent enquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptised for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins ? or when have they sinned ? None is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth.

" For this also it was, that the Church had from the Apostles a tradition [or order] to give baptism even to infants : for they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit : by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin."

Nothing can be plainer and more to the purpose than the testimony of the celebrated Origen. He, like all the rest, speaks of infant baptism,—not in the controversial, but in the narrative style,—as of an usage which descended from the Apostles that no one disputed or gainsayed.

A quotation from Cyprian, who flourished one hundred and fifty years after the Apostles :—

" We read your letter, most dear brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, &c.

" But as to the case of infants. Whereas you judge

that they must not be baptised within two or three days after they are born ; and the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptised and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born. We were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion : for as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind ; but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born."

It is very certain that the baptism of infants had no opponent in the days of Cyprian. Here was a Council of sixty-six Bishops, not voting that infants should, or should not be baptised. That they should, had never been disputed in the period which had elapsed since the time of Jesus Christ. The question of infant baptism then was not discussed at all, neither by the Council, nor by Fidus, the Presbyter, but only whether the child should be baptised within two or three days after it was born, or after it was eight days old. Fidius thought it should not till it was eight days, but there was not one of the Council of his mind.

Quotations from St. Chrysostom, who flourished two hundred and eighty years after the Apostles :—

"But our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the spirit : and it has no determinate time, as that had ; but one that is in the very beginning of his age, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision made without hands.

"For this cause we baptise infants also, though they are not defiled with [actual] sins."

St. Austin : flourished two hundred and eight years after the Apostles :—

"On which head men are wont to ask this question also, what good the sacrament of Christ's baptism does to infants : whereas after they have received it, they often die before they are able to understand any thing of it.

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"Which the whole body of the Church holds, as delivered to them, in the case of little infants baptised : who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation ; nay, by their crying and noise while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries : and yet no Christian man will say they are baptized to no purpose. And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter : though that which the *whole* Church practises, and which has not been instituted by Councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered [or ordered] by authority of the Apostles. Yet we may besides take a true estimate how much does the sacrament of baptism avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received.

"So in infants baptised the sacrament of regeneration goes before ; and [if they put in practice the Christian religion] conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after.

"So in infants that die after they are baptised, it is to be believed that the same grace of the Almighty does make up that defect, that by reason, not of a wicked will, but of want of age, they can neither believe with the heart to righteousness, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation.

"And so an infant, though he be not yet constituted a fidel [a faithful Christian], by that faith which consists in the will of believers ; yet he is, by the sacrament, of that faith : for as he is said to believe, so he is called a fidel ; not from his having the thing itself in his mind, but from his having received the sacrament of it.

"Parents run with their infants and little ones to procure the grace of holy baptism : in whom, if that bond of sin be loosed which is of the body only, and not that which is of the soul too, it may well be asked what hurt it would do them if at that age they should die without baptism : for if this sacrament be for the good of their body, and not of their soul too, they might be baptised after they were dead. But when as we see that the

Church universally observes this, to run with them while they are alive, and to help them while they are alive, lest when they are dead there be nothing to be done that can do them any good."

Nothing can be more decisive that these testimonials from the early fathers concerning the universal custom of baptising infants in the primitive Church. Now if any man in all the world can point out the time when infant baptism was introduced, as a new thing, after the death of the Apostles, and do so with any reasonable shew of proof, I hold myself bound to pause, and consider, and weigh, seriously and candidly, what he may have to advance. But who can do this, in the face of the clearest evidence that the universal practice of the Church was to baptise infants, not waiting till they were even eight days old? If, then, no man can shew the commencement of infant baptism at any period subsequent to the death of the Apostles, the unavoidable conclusion must be that infants were baptised in the days of the Apostles, and, by necessary consequence, were baptised with their sanction and approbation. Some of the fathers quoted affirm that the Church had received the custom from the Apostles;—received it, too, as the faith which was once delivered to the saints. For my part, I believe it with the heart, because it could not possibly have begun so early as the time we know from Justin Martyr it did, if Christ and his Apostles had not authorised it. Had it been an innovation, as our Antipedo-Baptist brethren say it is, so early as the time of Justin, Irenæus, and Origen, can we suppose that the Church, in her golden age, only a few years after the Apostles, was so destitute of faithful men as not to have one faithful witness to bear testimony to the truth? Faithful men were not asleep in those ages of miracles and martyrdom. When the Donatists and the Pelagians arose, the true witnesses were watchful and faithful, to oppose them with the sword of the Spirit; and nobly did they wield their spiritual armour. Now if the baptism of infants be an innovation, how is it that there was not one faithful servant of God upon earth to stand, like Pinneas, in the breach, that he might, at least, try to stem the torrent of error? It came in without opposition,

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Thus, we have seen that infants were, under the Mosaic law, admitted into the Church of God—under the personal ministry of Christ, who issued his commands as the King of Zion, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not"—under the Apostles, who began to execute their commission by saying, "the promise is unto you and to your children"—and under their successors, as we learn from the testimony of the primitive fathers. The Antipedo-Baptist scheme of excluding children, then, has no parallel in any age, under any religion, divine or idolatrous; for there is no religion upon earth of any kind, true or false, Christian, Jewish, Mahomedan, or Heathen, that leaves out children from its embrace.

CHAP. V.

THE COURSE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION WHICH THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ENJOIN UPON PARENTS TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN, IS FOUNDED ON THE FACT THAT THEY ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT, AND AS SUCH TO BE INSTRUCTED IN THE FAITH.

THAT our children are within the embrace of the covenant, unless by our unbelief we forcibly exclude them, every exhortation and command given in Scripture, to instruct them in the knowledge of God, most clearly presumps. It is because that they are the children of the covenant that they are commanded to be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The law and the Gospel unite in the same design of training them as the children of God:—"For I know him [namely, Abraham] that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord"—Gen. xviii. 19: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest on the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—Deut. vi. 6, 7: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets before your eyes: and ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: and thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your father to give them them as the days of heaven upon the earth."—Deut. xi. 18—21: "Thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women and children, and thy stranger

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that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children which have not known any thing may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."—Deut. xxxi. 19: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."—Prov. xix. 18: "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."—Prov. xxix. 15: "And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ephes. vi. 4: "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."—Col. iii. 20: "One that ruleth well his house, having his children in subjection with all gravity."—1st Tim. iii. 4. There are not so many instructions relating to children in the New Testament as in the Old Testament, and the reason, I suppose, is, that as the instruction of children was largely insisted on in the law and the Prophets, which all men are commanded to read and search, so there was the less need of repetition. The instructions of the Old Testament, like the precepts of the Decalogue, were to remain, because they were applicable, in full force and obligation. The foundation of all Christian instruction to children is laid in the covenant which God made with Abraham, to be a God unto him and to his seed after him in their generations. Children were His before, by creation: now they are doubly His, by virtue of having admitted them into his covenant by more endearing considerations. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. We are not our own, but his purchased possession. Hence, when the Gospel was preached after his resurrection and ascension of our Lord, it was, in effect, a setting forth of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant:—"The promise is unto you and to your children." Thus it was to the jailor, and to all others, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." He was the only person of his family that at that moment felt concerned about salvation. Why, then, was the promise extended to his

household? On Antipedo-Baptist principles the words have no more meaning, nor better calculated to give ease to his troubled mind, than if they were meant for some unheard of family, any where else in the world. The Gospel teaches us that when it comes to a family, especially to the parents, it brings salvation. The Gospel is the word of a King, and commands obedience. The parent has authority from the source of all power and wisdom, and is, therefore, commanded to exert his authority for the honour of God and the salvation of his family; and, therefore, when the Gospel comes to a house, it is presumed that he who has authority to stand at his fireside and say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," will teach his children the good way of the Lord. God himself said this of Abraham. The Apostles, then, knowing that the promise was "unto you and to your children," to the parents and also to their little ones, spoke to the jailer as they did—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." He believed and was baptised—he and all his straightway! This never can be realized under the theory of our Antipedo-Baptist friends. The thing is impossible; therefore, their views of baptism are opposed to Apostolic preaching and practice. No consistent Baptist could have sanctioned what is here recorded to have been both said and done by an inspired Apostle.

The principles which we have endeavoured to lay down and apply from the Scriptures of truth, shew distinctly that our children are included in the promise of the covenant, and that, therefore, we are as much bound to put upon them the seal of the covenant, and to instruct them in the knowledge and practice of the Christian faith, as ever the Patriarchs were to give their children the sign of circumcision, and the knowledge of the law. Those who refused the token of the covenant, refused by that act the covenant itself, and, for their contumacy, they were cut off from the congregation of the Lord. Can we presume that it will fare better with us than with them, since we are under a more excellent dispensation? Indeed, the ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience that prevail on the subject of Christian baptism, and Christian obligation to

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duty, are most deplorable. Our children in America are cut off from the congregation of the Lord, in thousands and millions, and, what is worse, they are cut off by their parents. Truth compels us further to declare, that even many who bring their children to the sacrament of baptism are so ignorant of its nature, and so indifferent respecting the obligations which it involves, as actually to render it of no effect; for this great sin, devastating the Church of God, by shutting out of her pale so many of the lambs of the flock, must be a great national sin that cannot escape the judgment of the Most High.

There are so many people, assuming the Christian name, who, so far from instructing their children in the Christian faith, declare it as their belief that they should be left free to make their own choice of religion; and, accordingly, they are left to their own choice. This, belief, however, it must be very evident, has nothing to do with the word of God, for it is not that word which it believes. The dogma which is believed and acted upon is not to be found in the Bible, but in the code of infidelity, which puts truth and error, religion and irreligion, the Gospel and "The Age of Reason," on the same footing. Not unfrequently have we witnessed the lamentable fact of parents professing the religion of Christ, and pretending to some shew of family worship, at which the children and other inmates are not required even to kneel, unless they are conscious of having experienced what they deem a change of heart. How far this practice is from that of Joshua need not be said:—"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Josh. xxiv. 15.

It is not enough that we give school education to our children. We must do more. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are necessary, but they only constitute an inferior part of what we are bound, by our promises and vows in baptism, to give our children. We must, according to our ability, teach them to know God—themselves as sinners—Jesus Christ as their Saviour—the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier. We must teach them that sin is a bitter thing, and the source and cause of all evil and misery, and that it cannot be pardoned but through the merits and death of our Lord Jesus Christ; that to be

pardoned, we must repent, believe the Gospel, and walk in newness of life. We must teach them, that as they cannot of their own strength turn unto God, and call upon him in an acceptable manner, without his special grace drawing and assisting him, so they must pray to God for the help, illumination, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Rom. viii. 9. We must teach them to put their whole trust in Christ, and, at the same time, to "work out their own salvation, with fear and trembling," as if the whole depended on themselves. We must teach them to be holy in all manner of conversation; to watch against sin in every shape and appearance; to keep the Lord's Day holy, and to serve God in the public ordinances and observances of his Church. We must teach them to live soberly, righteously, and godly, without which we cannot look forward to a blessed state of immortality. The religion of Jesus is indispensably necessary to every rational soul, not by fits, but at all times—necessary as the air we breathe, the food we daily eat. This religion is within our reach: it is communicated in the Bible, and preached to many, and in most places of our land. Its plain and essential parts are level to the capacity of all. O that we had a heart to consider and obey! We all want more faith, humbleness of mind, and a willingness to sit at the feet of Jesus, to learn our duty at his mouth. Had we more of the love of God in our hearts, and less boasting on our tongues, we would every where set a better example before the young, and contribute more to the increase of true religion in the world, than ever can be the fruit of zeal which is not according to love and knowledge.

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CHAP. VI.

THE OLD TESTAMENT-PROMISES WHICH RELATE TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL, ARE FOUNDED ON THE COVENANT WHICH GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM.

THE SUBSTANCE OF RELIGION IS THE SAME UNDER ALL DISPENSATIONS. RELIGION WAS NEVER WITHOUT VISIBLE INSTITUTIONS.

OUTWARD AND INWARD CIRCUMCISION, AND THE VARIOUS SERVICES OF THE SANCTUARY, WERE REQUIRED UNDER THE LAW.

WATER BAPTISM, AND THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST, TOGETHER WITH A DUE OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES, ARE REQUIRED UNDER THE GOSPEL.

ST. MARK XVI. 15, 16, EXPLAINED. THREE THINGS ARE REQUIRED IN A REGULAR CHRISTIAN BAPTISM—AN AUTHORIZED MINISTER, THE ELEMENT OF WATER, AND THE FORM OF WORDS WHICH JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF PRESCRIBED.

ROM. VI. 4, EXPLAINED. THE BAPTISM OF ST. JOHN NOT THE BAPTISM WHICH JESUS CHRIST AFTERWARDS INSTITUTED, BUT THE BAPTISM OF THE LAW LONG IN USE.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE MEANING OF THE WORD "BAPTISM," AS USED IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. THE BAPTISM OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH—THE JAILOR—CORNELIUS.

ST. MARK VII. 2—5, EXPLAINED. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST. BAPTISM MUST BE ADMINISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

SEEING that the light of the Gospel has come and shone upon us, gentiles, what cause have we not for gratitude to Him who has called us from darkness to his marvellous light! Before our Lord Jesus Christ, in the likeness of man, was upon earth, the blessings of true religion were confined to the Jews:—"To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."—Rom. ix. 4. None but the Jews, and such other people as would submit to be naturalized, and be as one with them, could be received as members of the congregation of the Lord. One law and one manner of worship were for the home-born

and the stranger. Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, was the seat as well of religion as of loyalty. Thither the people, from all parts of the kingdom, had to assemble three times every year. But when the fulness of time was come, the covenant was to be divested of all its worldly appendages, and to be presented in a more simple and practicable form to the other nations of the earth :—

"I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."—Isa. xlii. 6 : "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders : and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Isa. xlix. 6, 22, 23 : "And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Isa. li. 3. Jesus Christ announced himself as "the light of the world" ; St. John viii. 12 ; and also foretold, that as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so he should be lifted up on the cross, and draw all men to him.—St. John iii. 14 ; xii. 32. Thus, he not only announced himself as the long-promised Messiah, but also did his work :—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. xlv. 22 : "Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."—Isa. xlii. 1. The commission which Jesus Christ gave his Apostles, to teach all nations, gave effect to all these sublime promises and predictions. Under shadows and figures, the same promises were set forth and declared, from the days of Adam to Abraham, Gal. iii. 3 ; to Israel in the wilderness, Heb. iv. 3, and to the same people by a succession of prophets. But now they were to be extensively promulgated : the Church was commanded to enlarge the place of her tent, and to stretch forth the curtains of her habitations :—"For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit

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the gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.' Isa. liv. 2, 3. In fulfilment of these predictions, our Lord after his resurrection from the dead, and before his ascension into glory, commissioned and commanded his Apostles to extend their labours unto all nations :—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—St. Mark xvi, 15, 16.

The substance of religion has ever been the same under all dispensations. It never was without visible institutions and ordinances ; nor ever appointed but with a view to ameliorate the condition of man as a social and accountable being. Outward and inward circumcision were required of the Jews under the law : outward and inward baptism are required of us under the Gospel :—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man [any one] be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—St. John iii. 5. The same is recognised as the means of salvation by the Apostle :—"Not by works of righteousness which he have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Titus iii. 5. So likewise the Prophet Ezekiel, if it be allowed that he alludes to the subject :—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."—Ezek. xxxvi. 25. If the language of St. Mark be critically examined, it will be found to convey the same meaning :—"He that believeth and is baptised." The word "*believeth*" is in the present tense, signifying an act which is always present and always active ; whereas the word "*baptised*" is in the past tense, representing a thing past and already done. The original word being in the perfect tense, it should have been rendered "hath been baptised." Hence, every one that now believes the Gospel, denoting an act always present, or a faith never dead, but alive and active, and has been baptised, shall be saved. This explanation of the text is generally received by all, except by those who reject infant baptism on the one hand, or our right to baptise on the other. It often hap-

pens that a person who has made a profession of religion, and been baptised, sees fit to leave his Church or Society, and go over to another, professing new views and a new experience, but, notwithstanding, such a person is not often rebaptised by his new friends. His former baptism is thought to be sufficient though he declares, that at the time of receiving it he was either an infant, and could know nothing of what was done to him, or an unbeliever, and had no faith in Christ.

In order to constitute a regular baptism three things are necessary—a regular officer or minister, authorised to administer it, the element of water, and the name of the Holy Trinity.

There must be a regular authorised minister. Should a man administer baptism to himself it would not be a regular baptism; and, from the absence of example or precept to authorise it, it could not be recognized as valid: nor if a man should persuade his neighbour to baptise him, would the case be any better; for a man to baptise another, must have his authority to do so from the King and head of the Church. Hence, should a number of persons collect together, and then ordain one of themselves to be their minister in holy things, and that he who was thus ordained should proceed to ordain others, and so continue this succession through many hands, it is clear that the ordination, thus begun and carried on, could be no better at the last than it was at the first, totally unauthorized through all its stages.

Baptism is the authorised mode of receiving members into the body of Christ's flock, and therefore must be administered by a regularly ordained Minister of Jesus Christ. When our Lord came into the world, he found that his vineyard, the Church, had become a degenerate vine—that his father's house, which should have been a house of prayer to all people, had become a den of thieves. He, therefore, took his vineyard from the ancient husbandmen, and gave it to others. He rejected the tribe of Levi from the priesthood, and appointed a new order. As he was sent by his Heavenly Father, so he sent his Apostles to teach, extend, and govern his church or kingdom. To them he gave the miraculous powers of

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the Holy Ghost, and promised to be with them "always, even unto the end of the world."—St. Math. xxviii. 20. A succession of men is here implied. The promise extends farther than the lives of the men to whom it was given—even to the end of the world. The Apostles died like other men, but their successors live, otherwise the terms of the promise would be unintelligible. The chain, which had its first link in Jesus Christ, has never been broken, and, therefore, the promise has never failed. God sent Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ sent his Apostles; they sent, by prayer and the laying on of their hands, others to succeed them, in the persons of the first Bishops that followed them, and so on ever since. With this succession, the commission and the promise have ever since remained. This is the order of Zion's King. A man cannot force himself into it without a regular call and ordination under the hands of those who are authorized to ordain labourers into the vineyard, any more than a man can assume the command of a regiment of Her Majesty's forces, without a regular commission.

In order, then, to have a regular baptism, it must be performed by a Minister of Jesus Christ, not by one who has climbed over the hedge, but by one who has been "chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard." For more than fifteen centuries after the death of our Saviour, the Apostolic succession was held sacred throughout the whole Church, in all nations, and even now, notwithstanding the loose notions which abound, very little short of constituting every man his own priest, his own combatant, his own church, if not his own god, the great majority of the Christian world hold the Apostolic succession of episcopacy, as indispensable to the existence of the Church which Jesus Christ and his Apostles established. This being the order of the New Testament, which has Jesus Christ for its author, we ought to believe that, in proportion as the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and shine on the Church, the good old ways of the glorious company of the Apostles, and of the noble army of martyrs, will be restored to their pristine glory, and the de-

VICES of men thrown away as the idols of the heathen. Whenever the "good old ways" are deserted, and suffered to become a derision, we pray and hope that the light may yet break forth and dissipate the delusions which divide the body of Christ. When any one promotes schism in, or separation from, the body of Christ, he is guilty of a most heinous sin, a sin which ranks with the very worst; yet, in modern times, the sin of schism is not seen to be an evil, or an awful transgression against the law of Christ; it is never thought to be stained with guilt. The thoughts of professing Christians, and zealous reformers, have been turned away from the subject, but we pray and hope that the time is approaching when it will be studied, and that, when its enormity is seen, it will be repented of in sackcloth and in ashes.

In order to Christian baptism, water must be used. The original word for baptism is said to have but only one determinate meaning, which invariably signifies, in all cases, and under all circumstances, a total immersion of the body in water. It is not pretended that I feel myself competent to answer all the arguments that have been urged to prove that this immersion is the only mode of baptism recognized in Scripture. With the written controversy which has abounded on this subject, I have but a very limited acquaintance; and on that account, I only deal with what is heard, *viva voce*, more than with books. The following text is taken as a conclusive evidence in favour of total immersion: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Rom. vi. 4. I can see no proof of immersion in this, nor even the least allusion to the baptism of the holy Jesus, whether by sprinkling or dipping. When Jesus was upon earth, he said to his disciples, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?"—St. Math. xx. 23. The same is again repeated by another Evangelist: "But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how I am straitened till it be accomplished?"—St. Luke xii. 50. The baptism, in these two passages, refers to the sufferings of his ap-

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proaching death. In the former, it is spoken of as past; in the latter, as yet to come, but very near at hand. Our Saviour had his sufferings full in view, and hence, in prophetic language, "he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," through life. In the text quoted from Rom. vi. 4, the first circumstance that appears to claim our attention, after considering the death therein mentioned, is that of his resurrection,—"by the glory of the father." "He died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." "He is now exalted at the right hand of the glorious majesty on high." "Death hath no more dominion over him." Even as he liveth unto God, no more subject to death, so should we, as the fruit of our union with him, by that faith which we professed in baptism, "walk in newness of life." The comparison is evidently drawn between the glorified state of Jesus, no more to die for sin, and our obligation to live a holy life here. Christ reigns with God in Heaven, and therefore we should walk worthy of our vocation, and let him reign in our hearts, that his grace may keep us from sin. I trust I have cleared up this much abused text, and shewn that it has a very important practical meaning, namely, the inculcation of a holy life, in imitation of Christ, who "now liveth unto God."

Our Antipedo-Baptist brethren, with but few exceptions, among whom is the late Rev. Robert Hall, are positive that the baptism administered by St. John was the baptism of Christ, under the new dispensation. This is strange, surely, when we consider that Jesus Christ had not commenced his public ministry when St. John began to baptise. He exercised no part of his public mediatorial functions until after he was baptised by St. John. The baptism of John was administered without any set form of words, that we can find on record—without being in the name of Christ and of the Holy Ghost. Those whom he baptised knew not for a long time afterwards that there was a Holy Ghost, which could not have been the case, if they had been baptised in his name. We know that some of them were baptised long afterwards, by the Apostle St. Paul, the very same who wrote "one faith, one Lord, one baptism," as the unchangeable creed of

the Church of Christ.—Eph. iv. 5. We may be certain, that if he had recognized the baptism of St. John, as the baptism of Christ, he would not have rebaptised any of his disciples, as we learn he did.—Acts xix. 1—5. The baptism of St. John, so far from being an institution of the new dispensation, was only a continuation of one of the Mosaic rites of the law. It is remarkable that in the New Testament no directions are anywhere given relative to the manner of administering baptism. The reason, I apprehend, is, that the mode was already known, and stood in no need of particular elucidation. Our Antipedobaptist brethren, however, take up the New Testament, and peruse it, as if it had no more to do with the Old Testament, and the usages of the people who till then had the ordinances of God, than it has with the Alcoran of the Arabian impostor; and, finding the word baptism there as the name of an ordinance of the Gospel, they take it as an isolated, detached, arbitrary term, which has only one meaning, exclusively that of immersion. They take baptism as if it had no resemblance to any thing that was ever seen or known until St. John began to baptise in the River Jordan. And being, as they fancy, an entirely new thing, they talk as if the word was new too, and applied to describe an act which they say was performed, namely, a total immersion of the body in water. But neither the thing that was done by St. John, nor the name which characterised it, was new when the writers of the New Testament adopted the terms; and having used it without giving an explanation of the mode, we may safely presume that the mode was so well understood by all at that time, as to require no explanation. To ascertain its meaning, then, the proper way to find it cannot surely be to rake up heathen writers, but the sacred books and usages of the Jews. "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New," but in every thing the foundation of it. As an example of the mode of carrying on the inquiry, I would propose the following method: "He that washeth himself (*βαπτίζων*) after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing, *λαύρει*?" Sirach 34: 26. Here the above two Greek words are used in the same sense. The washing,

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or baptism, spoken of, is that so minutely described in Num. 19: "And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the children of Israel for a water of separation," in Greek, water of sprinkling. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean. And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, *εαψει*, and sprinkle it upon the tent, *περιβαλει*, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that toucheth a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave, and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself (*απαγνισθησεται* shall be purified) and wash (*λουει* applied to his clothes) and bathe (*λουσεται* applied to the body) himself in water, and shall be clean at even." To these sprinklings, bathings, and washings, the son of Sirach alluded; and though we do not receive his book as inspired, surely his authority, with regard to the sacred customs of his own people, must be as good at least as that of heathen writers, who are referred to as authorities, but very improperly on questions of which they knew nothing. The son of Sirach called the whole of that process, described in Num. xix. by these two words, *επιζουμιος* and *λουειν*. In Num. xix. two operations are minutely described; one by a clean person upon him that is unclean. It consists in sprinkling, which he performs by a bunch of hyssop dipped in the water of separation or sprinkling, which had been prepared for that purpose; the next operation is done by the clean person himself, and on himself, washing his garments, and bathing his body. Hence the operation which favours the theory of our Antipedo-Baptists has no administrator. The unclean is his own baptiser, and though he bathed his whole body, it was not the depth nor the quantity of water that cleansed him, but the water of sprinkling which was applied to him by an ad-

ministrator. All were more or less liable to the uncleanness mentioned in the Law, and, consequently, the process of cleansing was so very frequent and so very common, that no one could be ignorant of the mode: "One Law and one manner shall be for you and for the strangers that sojourn with you."—Num. xv. 16. It is not then surprising that the Jews, who had all been circumcised when they were eight days old, and always members of the church, yet like all people liable to touch dead bodies, and therefore had to be purified, should, from the frequency of the occurrence, be so well acquainted with the manner of applying the water, as to need no particular explanation, concerning the mode of applying the water, when St. John began to baptize. Moreover, they were in the habit of receiving proselytes to their religion from other nations. All the nations of the earth were described in their sacred books as unclean, and nothing did they embrace with stronger faith than such descriptions, so flattering to their own self-love. "The land to which ye go to possess it is an unclean land, with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness."—Ezra ix. 11. The Jews were so imbued with this view of other nations, that they would not associate with them in eating or in drinking. Hence St. Peter would not go to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, until God condescended to remove his scruples by a miracle.

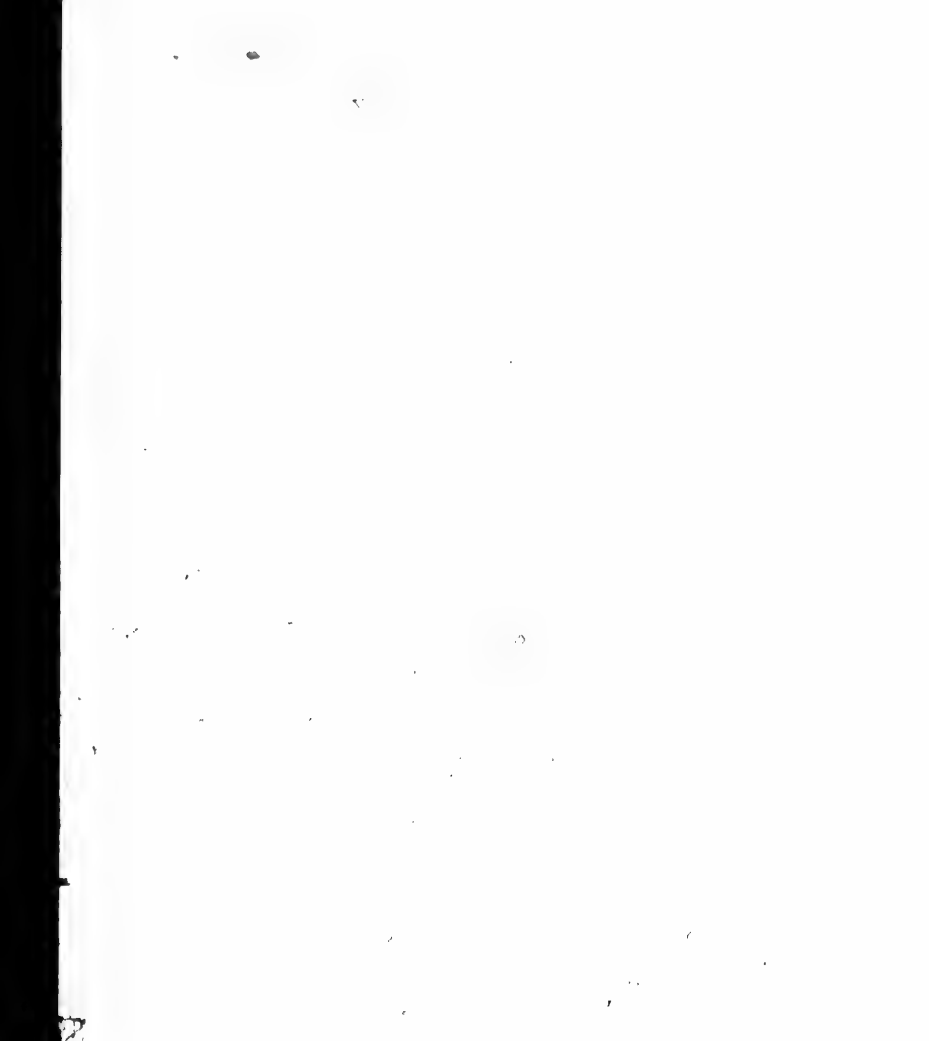
As the Law required of circumcised Jews, when polluted with any thing that was ceremonially unclean, to be sprinkled with the levitical "water of separation," to wash their clothes, and to bathe themselves in water, so it was required of strangers or proselytes to be baptized as well as circumcised. They knew well how the proselyte was baptised; they knew how their own purification was accomplished. At the giving of the Law, the "Lord said unto Moses, go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai,"—Exod. xix. 10. This was usual be-

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Jews, when ally unclean, "separation," res in water, be baptized now the own purification Law, the and sanctify wash their or the third the people usual be-

fore any great solemnity. In the case of St. John the Baptist, the solemnity of what was approaching was great. The Lord was suddenly to come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant.—Mal. iii. 1. St. John was sent by the God of Heaven to prepare the way for "the messenger of the covenant," and, therefore, it behoved him to prepare the people, as Moses did at the giving of the law, for his approach. Accordingly, he came "preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—St. Math. iii. 1, 2. That repentance which he preached is explained in the following passages:—"And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do, then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also the publicans to be baptised, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."—St. Luke iii 9—14. This was the way in which John was fulfilling the obligations of his mission. As a fit emblem of the internal and external preparation and purity required by him, he administered baptism, according to the practice of his nation at solemn times, and to the manner of receiving proselytes to their religion from the heathen. A learned Jew, who flourished about the twelfth century, that cannot be supposed to have borrowed his doctrine from Christianity, has the following remark:—"In all times," says Maimonides, "If any Gentile would enter into covenant, remain under the wings of the Schechina, or divine presence, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he is bound to have circumcision, baptism, and a peace-offering, because it is in the law, as ye are, so shall the stranger be;—as ye yourselves entered into covenant by circumcision, baptism, and a peace-offering, so ought the proselyte in all ages to enter in, though the peace of-



fering is to be omitted during our present state of desolation, but to be observed when our temple shall be rebuilt. By three things our forefathers entered into covenant with Jehovah, at Mount Sinai—circumcision, baptism, and an oblation. Baptism was used a little before the law—sanctify the people today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes: for wherever we read of the washing of clothes, there an obligation to baptism is intended." This is the account which the Jews give of the baptism which was in use from the giving of the law, until the time of our Saviour, and which is still kept up among them. It was this baptism, we have no doubt, that St. John administered at the River Jordan to the people who flocked to him from all parts of the land. What he administered presented nothing that was new to the Jews in manner or form; for the Scribes and the Pharisees who were sent by the great Council of the nation, to ascertain who he was, expressed neither surprise nor alarm on beholding his baptism, as they would naturally have done at an innovation or infringement of their law, because he was doing no more than what was daily practised, though on a smaller scale. They found no fault with his baptism; they felt no alarm, as if he did any thing that tended to disparage or change their religion. They merely enquired into his authority to officiate, when they found that he did acknowledge himself not to be the Messiah nor the Prophet. Had he acknowledged himself as any of those mentioned by them, or as one having equal authority, they would, evidently, not have questioned his right to administer baptism, as at that day practised by ancient allowance.

It is called the baptism of repentance. Repentance was the condition which St. John required of those who came to him for instruction, as the fittest way to prepare them for the reception of the doctrine and discipline of Messiah's kingdom. It corresponds with the manner in which Moses prepared the children of Israel, for the receiving of the law. Jesus Christ himself received John's baptism, not as confessing his sins, but as a public consecration for his work, and, at the conclusion, God Almighty, his Father, and the Holy Ghost, gave both audible and

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ocular testimony that he was the Son of God, and entitled to the obedience and homage of all the human race :—"And lo ! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."—St. Mark iii. 17.

We ought not, then, to mix up the baptism of John with that which Jesus Christ afterwards instituted for the remission of sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the sacrament of regeneration.

The manner of applying the water in baptism is not to be fully ascertained from the grammatical meaning of the word used to represent it, without taking the practice enjoined in the law, and the common usages of the people, into consideration. The law, on this subject, shews that when water was applied to any person by another, it was always applied by sprinkling, or pouring, never by dipping, or immersion. There is a manifest distinction between the act of the administrator, and that which is done by the recipient. He that sprinkles, or is the administrator, neither dips nor plunges the candidate, while the candidate has to wash his clothes and to bathe himself in water. It does not, therefore, appear that so much of the ancient rite of purification as had to be performed by an administrator, or the "clean person," went any further than to the applying of water by sprinkling, never to bathing, plunging, nor dipping. Now, in the baptism of St. John, which our Saviour and great multitudes received, there is no mention of any thing being done, but only that which he did himself as administrator. He was a Jew, following Jewish usages, and, therefore, it must be taken for granted that his baptism was in conformity to what was allowed to be sanctioned by the law and the customs of the country. John was always held in the highest veneration, and never accused of doing any thing contrary to the law. When he suffered death, it was for his strict adherence to the very letter of the law, and not for any real or supposed infringement. If, then, he acted as a Jew, it is certain that, in the baptism which he administered, he only applied the water by affusion or sprinkling.

The observations here made have been more than verified by a pamphlet lately put into my hands by an esteemed Christian, Baptist friend. The pamphlet has lost its title page, and with it the name of the author, but is otherwise whole, and contains forty-four pages. It is written under professions the most strong and solemn of faithful, conscientious adherence, in the fear of God, to the true meaning of Holy Scripture. The style is not harsh in tone or expression, but rather temperate and mild. This, however, is all the merit it can justly claim; for I am sure it has no pretensions to either candour or charity. A little acquaintance with human nature, and with the ways of the world, will shew that the perverting of an author's meaning, sophistical reasoning, and disingenuous conduct, may be couched under plausible terms. Accordingly, this zealous partizan has, with great labour, if he did it all himself, culled from no fewer than seventy-seven *Pedo-Baptist* writers as many as, if not more than, one hundred and twenty-seven quotations, to prove, first, what none ever denied, namely, that Jewish and Gentile converts to the Christian faith were always instructed before they were admitted by the Apostles to baptism; and, secondly, that the word "baptism" invariably, in the New Testament, means "immersion," and nothing else, "immersion" being its only meaning. The first is totally unnecessary, because the position is never denied. We affirm it as well as he does himself. But perhaps the author's object was to insinuate that we administered the ordinance without taking that precaution. The second is untrue, not merely with respect to the word "baptism," but also with respect to every word in every language on earth. Where is the word that has but one meaning? If we take up any dictionary or lexicon, we shall soon be convinced that no such word can be found. Turn up for the words *baptō*, *baptizō*, *baptismos*, and the various meanings you will find under each, will shew us what we ought to think of the moral honesty of the writer who affirms, that immersion is the only, exclusive meaning of the word baptism. The greatest wonder, however, is, not that a disingenuous writer should have made the assertion, but

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that he should have imputed, it to writers of the opposite side. Seventy-seven Pede-Baptist Divines are brought forward to prove that immersion is the only meaning of the word baptism. Now, according to this mode of dishonest, disingenuous culling of lines, definitions, and garbled sentences, without regard to the context, or connexion in which they stand in a book, nothing can be more easy than to establish any kind of erroneous doctrine, even from the works of the soundest Divine. The words which express any doctrine and practice are, to a certain extent, to be found in every author, just as they are to be found in Johnson's Dictionary; so that a designing, disingenuous writer has no more to do in establishing any hypothesis he chooses, but to cull from eminent authors of the contrary side, disconnected lines and garbled sentences, and then the work is done. Doctrines, the very reverse of those which their books maintain, are set forth under their names. What can be more dishonourable than this conduct? Is it not very closely allied to the pious frauds of the dark ages? Legends of false miracles, and fables for Christian doctrines, were palmed on the simple people in the same way. How few can have recourse to the seventy writers quoted, with a view to test the fidelity of the one hundred and twenty-seven quotations!

From the Bible, by a process so disingenuous, atheism and every vice on earth among men, may be proved to be sanctioned and inculcated by the word of God. Heresy, of every description, may be taken out of the word of God, or from the writings of any sound evangelical Divine. Out of the same flower, bees can extract honey, while some other insects only poison. To bring forward so many Pede-Baptist writers, not only of great celebrity in the Church, for their attainments, but also, many of them in the republic of letters of imperishable reputation, to maintain doctrines which they did not hold, and practices which they did not follow, is, to say the least of it, a measure of most shameless impudence. What I said in the text may be turned against me, but can such a dishonest fraud make me, in reality, to affirm that immersion is the only meaning of the word baptism?

I am not going to deny that immersion is one of the meanings of the word *baptism*. It is, like all other words in every language, susceptible of adapting itself to the variety of ways in which a thing may or can be done. All lexicographers and commentators that I have seen, allow, that dipping or immersion is among the significations of the word. But the use made of this concession by the Anti-Pedo-Baptists is wonderfully unfair and disingenuous. They have raked over the works of Pedo-Baptists, and wherever they found that immersion was allowed as one of the meanings of the term, every thing else that precedes and follows is at once thrown overboard. The Pedo-Baptist is pressed into their service. He is made to profess what he does not believe, namely, that the only meaning of the word baptism is immersion; and what is worse, he is made, in their hands, to act contrary to his conscience, and boldly to proclaim his hypocrisy. Thus, every Pedo-Baptist author that at any time wrote a syllable on the subject, has been dragged before the critical tribunal of the Anti-Pedo-Baptists, and compelled to give evidence contrary both to his own language and belief. The evidence is made out for him and put in his mouth, with no other trouble than merely to insert a few small words, such as "only," and then the evidence that Pedo-Baptists allow them to be right, while they practise the contrary themselves, is all complete and all convincing. Every thing else in connection with the supposed concession is suppressed, before the evidence thus obtained is laid before the readers of one side of the question. I expect the same disingenuous use will be made of my concessions. But the disingenuousness of the argument thus turned against us is not new. The Jesuits made use of it long ago. When we allow, in the exercise of that charity which the Gospel requires, that salvation may be obtained within the pale of the Roman Church, the Jesuit meets our charity, by saying, "Then it is safer, even on your own shewing, to be in our Church than in your own. We do not allow that salvation can be had out of the Church. The Church of Rome is the *one* true Church, which Jesus Christ ever established upon earth. Within her pale, salvation may be had, as you allow; without

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her pale, there is nothing but death; therefore, it is safer to trace your way back to Rome." Jesuitism is more extensively ramified than many people imagine.

To ascertain the meaning of the word baptism, some have applied themselves to heathen writers; but this course appears to me preposterous. Heathen writers never saw the Bible, and had no acquaintance with the customs of the Jews. They cannot, therefore, be any authority to determine the meaning of a word which has been used to denominate a Jewish rite. Its meaning should be sought for, among the people themselves that used it, or in the inspired writings which record their institutions and usages.

Baptizo, I baptize, is derived from the verb *Batto*, which signifies, to dip, to tinge, to immerse, in the manner of dyers. Let us take a view of some of the passages in which it is used. In its simple, uncompounded state, here it is—"And send Lazarus, that he may dip (*Batto*) the tip of his finger in water."—St. Luke, xvi. 24. "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it, (*Batto*) and when he had dipped the sop (*εμβαλεις*) he gave it to Judas Iscariot."—St. John, xiii. 26. In the last passage it is found both in its simple and compounded state, but varying not in the sense. "He that dippeth (*εμβαλεις*) his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."—St. Matth. xxvi. 23. "It is one of the twelve that dippeth (*εμβασιμους*) with me in the dish."—St. Mark, xiv. 20. "And he was clothed with a vesture (*βεβαμμενον*) dipped in blood."—Rev. xix. 13. "Whatever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put (*βαλμεται*) into water."—Levit. xi. 32. These are some of the passages in which the verb that really means to dip, to immerse, is used. There may be some more which I do not remember, but without a concordance, the search is difficult. One passage more will shew that even this verb does not always signify to dip or immerse:—"And his body was wet (*ιβατην*) with the dew of heaven."—Dan. iv. 33. This verb is never, so far as I can find, applied to express or designate baptism. Now if baptism means immersion, is it not very remarkable that the word which really means immersion

is never used in the New Testament to express it? What can be the reason that the inspired writers so scrupulously abstain from using sometimes one for the other? According to the views of the Anti-Pedo-Baptists, as frequently stated to me, it would make no difference which of the two βαπτίζω, or βαπτίζω, was used, as in their theory they are synonymous.

It was my intention to give a list of the passages in which the verb βαπτίζω is used, but on trial I found them to be too numerous for the purpose of forming a catalogue of them. One thing, however, is very clear, that, if βαπτίζω meant only to *immerse*, the sacred writers would not have so carefully abstained from applying, at least sometimes, the word which, means *to dip*, to *immerse*, to the Sacrament of Baptism. But a word of a greater latitude of meaning is uniformly preferred. St. John was a Jew when he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. His life was formed on the practice of godliness which was inculcated by the Law and the Prophets, for the purpose of forming the life of a holy man. He was still a Jew when he baptized at the River Jordan. In the Law which he followed as his guide, there was neither command, nor precept, nor example, to authorize immersion by the administrator. For, in the Mosaic ritual, which he followed, the administrator, as proved in another place, applied the water by sprinkling, and left the person sprinkled to wash his clothes, and bathe himself, at his own convenience. The expression that Jesus "went up straightway out of the water,"—St. Math. iii. 16—does not determine the fact of *immersion*. For, the proposition "*out of*," is *away from*. It is the same as in St. Mark, i. 10, speaking of the baptism of Jesus. All this would have been said of a person standing on the margin of a river, which the blessed Jesus, no doubt, did, while John took up the water and poured it down upon him. Of all the baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, it is remarkable how few can assist our inquiries respecting the exact mode in which the water was applied. We must, therefore be guided by the cases that are more clear.

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The Ethiopian Eunuch was travelling on his journey when he was baptized. The Lord, who knoweth the hearts of all men, knowing this man's desire to receive the knowledge of God and salvation, directed Philip to go and introduce himself to him in his chariot, and explain to him what he was so anxious to learn. Philip found him deeply engaged in reading the Prophet Isaiah. After asking him a few questions, with a view to discover what he most wanted, that he might be enabled to adapt his explanations to his case, and finding that he received the word gladly, and was thereby prepared to confess Christ, he baptized him, at his request, as soon as they came to a fit place. The chariot was stopped. "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.—Acts, viii. 38, 39. It is very true that the prepositions here are *in* and *out of*; but surely they are to be explained by the known practice, and we have already seen what the practice had always been. Besides, the history of this baptism gives not the least intimation of either a river or pond being in the place—only water is all that is mentioned, and any quantity of that element is water, whether it be a river, a pond, a small streamlet, or a spring. To prove that this baptism was immersion, it must be first proved that there was a sufficient depth of water for the purpose. But where is the proof? It is not in the history of the transaction, and where else we need not care. But, supposing for a moment the truth of what cannot be proved, namely, that the Eunuch was immersed, how improbable it must still be, that they would both have plunged themselves into deep water, just as they were, in their travelling dress, without any preparation, and then allow themselves no time, after it was over, to change their dripping garments, but proceed on their journey as if nothing had happened. If this was an immersion of the whole body under water, it has not many imitators in any one point of resemblance. Those who plead for it, furnish themselves with conveniences

of which we see no trace in the baptism of the Eunuch, or in the baptism of the thousands that were baptized at the River Jordan. When people claim the distinction of following the Scriptures closer than their neighbours, they should be consistent, and leave no flaw in their conduct exposed to detection.

In the case of the Jailor, we shall be still farther from any proof of immersion. He and his household were baptized. Household, in almost every case upon earth, includes children. The Anti-pedo Baptists exclude children from the covenant of God's grace, and would have made it impossible, had they lived in the days of Joshua, for him to say, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Josh. xxiv. 15. The Jailor and his house were baptized in the dead of the night. We do not read that there was either a river or a pond in that city. The man baptized was a Jail-keeper. He would not, therefore, have left his charge, and if he could, he certainly had no liberty to take his prisoners with him. Violating his duty, must not be supposed to have been the first fruits of his conversion. Nature had denied the convenience of a river to that city; and even if there had been one in the street, rolling down at a short distance from his door, would he have taken his prisoners out? View the case as we may, two obstacles present themselves to us in opposition to immersion, which cannot easily be removed. The want of a river, and power and authority to lead the prisoners out, on any pretence. It is, therefore, evident, that, in this case, baptism was administered, not by immersion, but by the application of water sprinkled, or poured, on the persons that were baptized.

Concerning Cornelius and his household, this emphatic expression is used—"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Does this question imply immersion? Is there any thing more intended to be conveyed than merely as much water as should be necessary for the purpose? If the exclusive practice was to immerse, then it is granted that this was not an exception. But the mode of sprinkling being in conformity to the custom

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which had ever been followed, the question "can any man forbid water?" is natural and in keeping with constant usage.

It appears, then, from the simple accounts we have of the baptisms which are recorded in Scripture, that the persons baptized were not immersed, and yet they were baptized by the inspired Apostles of Jesus Christ, who must be allowed to have known their duty, and the meaning of the word *baptism* as well, at least, as the wisest of the moderns. We need not, then, be much concerned about the numerous criticisms that have been laid out on the Greek verb *to baptize*, in order to make out its meaning to be, in all cases, *to dip*, *to plunge*, *to immerse*, as it could not require much labour to shew that it has as many different shades of meanings as the English word *to wash*. Now, if a foreigner, learning English, should happen to see a person going into the river, swimming and diving to the bottom; and on inquiring of a spectator what the man was doing, should be told that he was washing himself, and should then go away, maintaining ever afterwards that *to wash* meant to dive head and ears into deep water, and could admit of no other meaning whatsoever—who would not smile at his simplicity and conceit? Yet the foreigner would not be more out of the way than the Anti-pedo Baptist. They assert, both in speaking and writing, that the word in question has only one meaning, and that that meaning is *to immerse*. I will, however, attempt to convince the most "slow of heart," that they are much mistaken. To do this, I need only present a few texts in which the word occurs, and leave the reader to be his own judge:—"Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?" The Greek word is *νίπτουσιν*. "But to eat with *unwashed* (*ἀνέτους*) hands defileth not a man."—St. Math. xv. 2, 20: "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say with *unwashed* (*ἀνέτους*) hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash (*νίπτουσιν*) their hands oft, eat not. And when they come from the market, except they wash (*βαπτίζουσιν*, baptise) they eat not, and many other

things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups (*Baptismos*, baptism) and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. But to eat bread with unwashed (*anestatos*) hands."—St. Mark, vii. 2-5. In these verses we have the verb *Baptizo*, to baptise (and the substantive *Baptismos*, derived from it,) used as an equivalent to the verb *arizo*, which signifies simply to wash—for instance, some part of the body, the hands, feet, face and eyes. The usual way of washing hands, for people in good circumstances, was to have a servant pour it on the hands. "And one of the King of Israel's servants answered and said, here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah."—2 Kings, iii. 11. Now this washing of the hands is called by St. Luke, the baptizing of a man, or a man's being baptized. "The Pharisee marvelled that he had not washed (*anestatos*) before dinner."—St. Luke, xi. 38. From this it is certain that the inspired writers used the word *to baptize*, for any ordinary washing—for a washing that did not admit of immersion. Common sense, on a review of these passages, must shew, unless we close our eyes against the light, that it is neither necessary nor convenient, that in order to wash pots, brazen vessels, and tables, they should be immersed. But if the Greek word always meant immersion, and that only, as we are told it invariably does, it would have argued great oversight or ignorance in any writer, much more in writers that were inspired of the Holy Ghost, to apply a word meaning immersion, exclusively to the washing of things which did not require immersion, and which, if they did, would be laying an unnecessary, intolerable burthen on all housekeepers in the world. Other appropriate words were at hand. There was no need of doing such violence to the common mode of speaking, as to apply a word exclusively meaning immersion to the washing of things that are never immersed.

We trust it has now been shewn by a fair investigation of the meaning of the word that it does not exclusively mean to immerse, but only the application of water, modified by the nature of the object to which it is applied, by pouring, sprinkling, or affusion, as practised through a long succession of ages before the coming of Messiah.

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St. Paul speaks of baptisms under the law thus, "divers washings"—*Baptismos*, baptisms. The passages that have been quoted from the books of Moors shew what the baptisms of the law were;—that they were of common occurrence, so well known to every one as to need no special directory to shew how they were to be done, and, therefore, no directions are given in the New Testament respecting the mode. If we do not, then, go back to the Old Testament, and to the usages of the people who had "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," we may please ourselves with arbitrary, fanciful, and etymological explanations, but we shall be far enough from the truth.

The explanation above given will be further confirmed, if we consider that water is a fit emblem of the purifying and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and lives of those who believe and know the truth as it is in Jesus. St. John the Baptist said: "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," St. Math. iii. 11; "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost," St. Mark i. 8; "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," St. Luke iii. 16. Water can only purify the body, not the soul, whether the quantity applied be large or small. The Holy Ghost, and he alone, can purify and sanctify the soul. Water cannot reach to the defilement of the soul; therefore, when it is applied, it is to represent to our weak capacity the influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone can reach the soul of man. Now the Holy Spirit is always represented as being poured down from on high—to be shed abroad—to come down as rain or dew. He is never, that I can remember, compared to a river or lake, in which we are to be plunged or immersed. Water, therefore, in baptism is very fitly poured or shed upon us like rain or dew, corresponding with the invariable mode of speaking with regard to the influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of believers. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost," would sound strange if rendered according to the notions of the Antipodean Baptists. "I indeed baptise you *with* water unto repentance." The preposition *with*, they say, should have

been rendered so. If so, it certainly should have been rendered so in the last clause of the verse, for the original preposition is the same in both; and then it would read, "He shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost."—St. Matth. iii. 11. This rendering, no one need be told, represents the Holy Ghost as a deep river or lake in which believers, at their baptism, are to be plunged or immersed; whereas, on the contrary, the Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit of God as pouring down like rain or dew. To such gracious influences the forerunner of Christ referred; and may the God of Heaven grant that they be showered down upon us, and upon all who profess the name of Christ! For such influences the Apostles looked and prayed. It may be added, that such a blessed influence satisfied the great Prophet who looked as far through the vista of future times as any other of the most favoured of ancient seers; and it should satisfy us. The promise of St. John the Baptist expressly said they should be "baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The subsequent history of the early Church shows that this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost:—"There came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii. 2, 3. In all his influences, whether the comparison is made to water or to fire, the Holy Spirit is always represented as coming down, never as a depth of water, or as a lake of fire, into which we are to be immersed. We have no right, then, to bind people's consciences to man's inventions in matters of religion, under the imposing name of a divine ordinance. But if one prefers more water than the word of God requires or prescribes, let him be satisfied with his own way, without enforcing his opinions on others; and if another, in more accordance with scripture, be satisfied with less, let him not be censured or condemned, as if following the commandments of men, when he is conscientious in following the commandments of God, and that practice which I have shewn as undoubtingly derived from the Apostles. We have, certainly, no more right to require a great

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quantity of water in the sacrament of baptism, then we have to insist on a full meal in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The argument that holds good for immersion, holds equally good, by parity of reason, for a full meal in the Lord's supper; because, if baptism means a total immersion, how can we avoid requiring a full meal in the Lord's supper? The word "supper" means a full meal. You say "baptism" means a total immersion of the body under water, and that nothing short of this is baptism. You will not administer the Eucharist to any of us, because, in your opinion, we are unbaptised; yet we have, in proportion, as much water in our baptism, as either you or we have of bread and wine in the Eucharist. How, then, according to your theory, will a small quantity of the elements suffice in one of the sacraments, when you must have a deep, flowing river, or a great cistern full of water, in the other? Making the most of baptism that you can, as a total immersion, you are bound to make a full meal, according to the customs of the times in Judea when our Saviour was upon earth, of the Eucharist. A small quantity, such as Christians universally use in the Eucharist, much smaller than one mouthful, never was reckoned, any where in the world, as a supper. Our Antipedo-Baptist brethren, must improve on the Eucharist,—not as the Roman Church has done, by withholding a part altogether, and diminishing the other, but by a very large increase of both. Analogy requires this improvement; for, as the case has hitherto stood, the Eucharist is no more a supper, though distinguished by that name, than sprinkling is baptism. It is, therefore, time to enlarge our ideas, and change it into tables groaning under the weight of all the dishes that are necessary at supper.

Baptism must be administered in the name of the ever-adorable Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Unless it be administered in this name it is not baptism at all. For this reason, then, as well as others, we must conclude that the baptism of St. John was not Christian, but, as we have seen, Jewish baptism, because it was not administered in the name of the blessed Trinity. John, indeed, taught his disciples that the

Messiah was at hand. This was the office which he was honoured with, but he did not baptise either in his name or in the name of the Holy Ghost. He was not one of the ministers of the new dispensation, but the herald proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. He came sometime before, and closed his ministry after, Jesus entered upon his. He ushered in the Son as heir, and when that was done his part was accomplished, and then sealed his ministry by his death. Having been only the herald of the new dispensation, to prepare the way of the Lord, and not properly one of our Lord's disciples, though indeed greater than any of the Prophets, but, at the same time, less than the Apostles who preached Christ crucified, he did not administer the baptism of the Gospel, which was not then instituted, but merely the baptism of Moses.

So much for the three things that are indispensable in the administration of baptism—a regular minister of Jesus Christ, the element of water, and the name of the Holy Trinity.

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CHAP. VII.

THE INWARD SPIRITUAL GRACE WHICH IS INGULCATED BY THE ORDS-
NANCE OF BAPTISM.

THE TERMS "NEW BIRTH AND REGENERATION" EXPLAINED. THE
PRIMITIVE GOSPEL MEANING OF THE WORDS NOW MYSTIFIED,
BUT RETAINED IN THEIR ORIGINAL MEANING IN OUR LITURGY.
ST. JOHN III. 5, EXPLAINED. THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM AS
GENERALLY NECESSARY TO SALVATION, BUT NOT, AS FAITH AND
THE INWARD SPIRITUAL GRACE, ABSOLUTE. REMARKS ON ST.
MARK XVI. 16—HES. XL 6. NO EXCUSE FOR THE WILFUL
NEGLECT OF BAPTISM. THE STATE OF THE HEATHEN, AND THE
RULE BY WHICH THEY SHALL BE JUDGED.
MEN MUST BE CONVINCED OF THEIR SINS BEFORE THEY WILL COME
TO JESUS CHRIST AS SUPPLICANTS. AN EARNEST EXHORTATION.

It remains yet to treat of the "inward spiritual grace."
This part is of the utmost importance; because it is evi-
dent that "the outward visible sign" may be regular in
point of form, while the "inward" may be absent. "He
that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that
believeth not shall be damned."—St. Mark xvi. 16. The
promise here made is to the believer, and, that we may
know who the believer is, he is thus characterised by the
Apostle:—he believes "with a heart unto right-
eousness."—Rom. x. 10. He is baptised, according to
St. Mark. It should, however, be observed, that the latter
clause of St. Mark's declaration does not represent the
outward ordinance in the same strong light in which be-
lieving is set forth. Belief and baptism are jointly de-
clared as necessary to salvation—the former indispensable,
the latter nearly so, but not absolute. The penitent
thief was saved without baptism, but not without faith.
He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. In St.
Mark's declaration baptism is omitted in the latter clause,
but damnation is said to follow unbelief. "The inward
spiritual grace," then, is of paramount importance, im-
plying that without faith salvation is impossible, but that,

under some circumstances, it might not be so with one unbaptised. The case of the thief on the cross is to the point. He had faith, but not baptism. Our catechism, therefore, wisely teaches that baptism is generally necessary to salvation, but does not determine that it is absolute. Belief, or faith, is indispensable. "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. Without faith it is impossible to please God."—Hab. xi. 6. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."—St. John iii. 36. "The inward spiritual grace" is, therefore, indispensable. There can be no salvation without it, under any circumstances or emergencies.

Yet though a difference must be made between the obligation of the one and that of the other, there can be no allowance for the wilful neglect of baptism. Where the lack can be allowed, or overlooked, it must be shewn that invincible ignorance of its nature and obligation was the cause, or that the opportunity of obtaining it was impossible; or, in other words, that it was purely a case of necessity. From this consideration it will readily appear that neither the one nor the other can be very common in our day; because it will readily occur to the mind, that, wherever there is so much faith as will save, ignorance of the obligation to be baptised cannot be very probable; as the knowledge of the one will necessarily bring the knowledge of the other. Though allowance, therefore, is made for possible exceptions from the rule, the general rule must be that which holds good. "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."—St. John iii. v. The word, "*a man*," should have been rendered "*any one*," as including old and young; a phrase certainly including infants. Our Saviour, unquestionably, meant baptism as necessary for all ages from the new born child to the age of grey hairs, when he made this strong declaration respecting the necessity of a new birth "of water and of the Spirit." But, in modern times, these his most solemn words, have, in the comments and glosses of many, especially of all who

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would be popular and followed, *lost* their original divine meaning, and have come, contrary to their design, to speak of repentance and conversion, as well as of the renovation of the spirit. The three are absolutely necessary to salvation. They are taught, and insisted on in many other places of Scripture much more copiously than baptism itself; but here the words themselves are so appropriated to baptism, that it is astonishing how even the perverse wit of man could have wrested them from the meaning which, in high relief, is inscribed on their very face. In the new birth of our Saviour, water is indispensable; for water and the Spirit are conjoined. In a modern new birth, water has nothing whatsoever to do. It is never even mentioned. The idea of a birth has suggested pains and pangs which were no sooner suggested, than they were transferred to express the anguish, sorrow, and remorse of repentance, and so, by another easy transition, conversion stands for the new birth or regeneration. Now, what has water to do in the process of repentance from dead works, in the sorrow and remorse of an awakened conscience? Indeed, the most part of the pious volumes that have been written, and of the mystical discourses that have been preached, on this subject, within the last hundred and fifty years, are worse than fables; a darkening of the word of God. Among the primitive fathers, there is hardly any text of the New Testament more frequently explained and applied by them than this part of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, which they uniformly applied to baptism. Hence baptism has always been styled a *new birth*, or a *regeneration*. Our Church has the honour of still retaining, against much obloquy and opposition, the language of our Saviour, his Apostles, and of the noble army of Martyrs, in its genuine, unadulterated meaning, as well in her liturgy as in her baptismal offices. But, when baptism came to be misunderstood, by applying the language which enjoins it, to other and different things, a cloud of darkness soon spread itself on the word of God, which cannot easily be removed.

It will, perhaps, be asked, how, if faith and baptism be so necessary, can the heathen be saved? Such a

question as this, thank God, we are not called upon to determine. They are in the hands of the righteous Judge of all the earth. In every nation, every one that worketh righteousness is accepted of him. Of them it may be said, "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For, unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."—St. Luke, xii. 47, 48. Concerning the heathen, it is evident, from this rule of God's government, that there is less required, because they have only the light of nature, while we have the light of revelation. But the rule referred to, does not, however, imply that they shall escape. They are responsible for the measure of light which God has given them to possess. We, on the other hand, must and shall be judged by the rules of that blessed book which too many now slight. Therefore, whatever be the obedience and preparation that may be required of the heathen, it is certain that we who have the Bible, and the privileges of God's church, for our benefit, must have "the inward spiritual grace, and the outward visible sign"—faith and holiness. We must believe in Jesus Christ "with the heart unto righteousness," and bring forth, in our lives, fruits meet for repentance. We must, "with the mouth, make confession unto salvation."—Rom. x. 10. In order to have this faith we must have a deep sense of our sins, and a hearty, sincere repentance. We must feel that we are far gone from original righteousness, and are under the condemnation of the holy law of God. Being "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked," we must be sensible that we are so. Without being sensible of our disorders, we never seek for a cure; for, unless we are convicted of sin, and yield to our convictions, we never think of applying to God for mercy and pardon. They that are whole see no need of applying to the physician. It is the work of the Holy Spirit of God to convince the sinner—to humble his naturally proud heart—to open his understanding that he may see the vileness of sin, the beauty of holiness, the suitableness of

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Christ's atonement, and lead him to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. Still, we must not expect that the work will be performed without our co-operation in the use of means. For, while we remain careless and indifferent, there can be no hope of salvation, because we have no ground for the belief that the Holy Spirit will renew our hearts while we resist or refuse to submit to his godly motions. The Holy Spirit, time after time, strives with men, moves their feelings, gives them a view of the evil of sin, sets before them the danger of their state, and the great importance of an interest in the Saviour of sinners. But while they obstinately resist his godly motions, and indulge themselves in a little more sleep and a little more slumber, they never can be but in danger of perishing forever. We must, therefore, submit to his teaching ; otherwise we can never be renewed in the spirit of our minds, nor saved in the day of the Lord. There is room, then, for the most pressing and urgent exhortations to be given, whenever we speak to our fellow men, that, if by any means, it may please God to accompany his word with power to their hearts, and raise them from a death of sin to a life of holiness.

God has set before us life and death. If we love sin, and persevere in it, we may have our choice, and the loss of heaven as the result. If we choose darkness rather than light, darkness shall be our doom. Will you not, then, O sinner, be entreated and persuaded to repent, and turn unto the Lord ? Why will you die in your sins, when the blood of Jesus flows to cleanse you ? The Gospel, which proclaims salvation to the guilty, cannot save you unless you submit to its terms, and believe in Christ unto righteousness. A name to live, a mere profession of faith, cannot save you, unless you be alive to God, and walk in newness of life. The ark of the covenant cannot save you, unless you enter it in season, before the floods begin to overwhelm you with destruction. The Gospel is calling upon you to enter—to suffer no consideration to hinder you—to escape, for your life, without a moments delay, that you may not be consumed with the wicked. Do, for a moment, consider this solemn declaration which has, more than once, been set before you—

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."—St. Mark, xvi. 16. This is not any language. It is not the language of sensible men, but the declaration of that adorable Being by "whom things were made," and who will come, in the glory of Almighty God, with his holy Angels, to judge the world, at the last and GREAT DAY;—of him who will say to the wicked,—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." When the sentence, by him, shall have been pronounced, "these," the wicked, "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."—St. Mark, xvi. 41, 46. Can this prospect be pleasing to any human being? There is, however, no other prospect before the impenitent sinner;—"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."—1st Cor. vi. 9, 10. A similar description and denunciation of the wicked is given in another place which embraces a few more disqualifying vices, but still very common in the world—"Uncleanness, lasciviousness, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness."—Gal. v. 20, 21. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."—Rev. xxi. 27. "Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" is left without.—Rev. xxi. 15. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."—Exod. xx. 7. "He that believeth is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God;—he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the Son of God abideth on him."—St. John, iii. 18, 36. Mark on these passages, set before you, from the word of God, the seriousness and prayers. You will find yourself, O sinner, included under some of the descriptions. The kingdom of heaven is barred against every one of the vices mentioned. What, then, can be said to you, but that, unless

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repent, believe the Gospel, and cultivate holiness of heart and life, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven? "He that believeth not shall be damned." There is no modifying of this sentence, that will make it safe to continue in sin and unbelief. All must appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and there receive according to their works. In a short time, we shall all be removed to our final allotment. How, then, can any rational being spend his days in a course of disregard of the things which belong to his peace?

If it will please God, of his mercy and goodness, so far to bless our feeble endeavours, in this little work, to turn the attention of any of our fellow creatures to the covenant which God made with Abraham, and his seed, the covenant through which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, as to lead, but even a few, to the knowledge of the truth, of the foundation of the blessed Gospel, of that divine commission which Jesus Christ gave to his Apostles, our labours shall not have been in vain. A true knowledge of the dispensation of the fullness and freeness of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, will shew us that our children are the objects of heaven's care and love from their birth—that, by the appointment of God, our heavenly father, they are to be recognized as within the covenant of the Gospel, by the administration of a visible sacrament, and that to exclude them from the privileges which their heavenly father has graciously provided for them is a dreadful sin. The obligation to faith and repentance and obedience, to be enforced upon them, when they come to the years of discretion, from the consideration that they are the children of the covenant, and that the seal of God to that effect is upon them, but if we leave them without, we contravene the ordinance of God, frustrate his commands, and virtually recognize the god of this world as having the paramount rule. Any hopes of a great reformation must begin by doing our duty to the young.

CHAP. VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE Church, as she came forth from under the hands of such wise master-builders as the Holy Apostles, baptized the tender lambs of the flock. To this day, ample provision is made that every baptized child shall be instructed in the knowledge of the Christian faith. Sponsors, in addition to the obligation which religion and natural affection lay upon the parents, are required, as they were, in the primitive Church, stipulating that in due time, "he shall be taught what a solemn vow, promise and profession he hath here made by" them. Sponsors and parents may neglect their duty, but only at the peril of violating the most solemn engagements that can be made. It is not, however, to be denied that the violation is too common. But what then? Are we to throw away every thing that is good, because some are found to neglect their duty? If so, we may throw away the Bible and the preaching of the Gospel, which have been abused as much as any other of the gifts of God. But should the baptized child, as many do, after coming to the years of understanding, forget the vows and promises made, in his name, by his sponsors, or be brought up in ignorance, so as to disgrace his spiritual relationship, it does not, therefore, follow that God had failed in his promise, or that baptism is an unprofitable Ordinance, but only that he, on his part, forsook the Lord, forfeited his privileges, and became a reprobate.

Jesus Christ commissioned and commanded his Apostles to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and immediately added, to shew that the commission, and with it the obligation on our part, were perpetual, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." As long as the promise stands thus, so long will the obligation to baptism continue.

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The Scriptures frequently mention baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the remission of sin together in such terms as convey the idea that the three go together. On this point, I am persuaded, that the doctrine of baptism is but very little understood in modern times. We certainly have not that understanding of its nature and designs and efficacy which the New Testament inculcates, and which the primitive Church had. The New Testament and the primitive Church keep baptism and the remission of sins joined—the latter as a fruit of the former. "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts, ii. 38. It would not appear that those words are involved in obscurity, so as to hinder the sense from being easily apprehended, but rather shew that there is not faith to lay hold of them. By baptism we are received into the body of Christ's Church; into the family of the redeemed or adopted children. The language of Scripture is plain. Obscurity is not so much to be complained of in the Scriptures as want of faith in us. For want of faith, baptism is almost lost in our times. How few believe it to be the appointed way of admission to the Church of God? Men have invented another method, which depends on what a person can relate of his own feelings and mental exercise, to which, from the nature of the case, there can be no witness, either to invalidate, or confirm, what the candidate chooses to say of himself. In primitive times, baptism was received as an ordinance of God. It is now a mere ceremony, of so little practical importance, in the view of many, that for any use they may make of it, it might be omitted. Hence, it is very clear that the sacrament of baptism is not understood, and that the misunderstanding does not so much relate to a misconception of the language which sets it forth and enjoins it, as to absolute disbelief of Scripture on that point. People do not believe the Scriptures. If baptism be a sacrament of God's instituting—if that sacrament be the only way of admission into his Church, then, where it is rightly administered, according to God's holy ordinance, a benefit of inestimable value must, ne-

cessarily, be conferred and received. "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." Some may think that this language is too strong, but it is not more so than the language of Scripture. "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."—Gal. iii. 27. But this is not believed any more than the baptismal office: for, instead of having the faith of Christians, too many who bear the name, have the unbelief of the heathen *Nathan*, and the doubting, wondering incredulity of *Nicodemus*. The unbelief of men, however, cannot disannul the word of God; which teaches that those who are rightly baptized are admitted into the body of which Christ is the head, and in which his spirit dwells as a spirit of knowledge and sanctification; as a spirit of faith, hope, and charity, to quicken, direct, illuminate and comfort all the members that do not resist and quench his godly motions.

That baptism for which we give thanks to God for every one we baptize, pass the candidate within the embrace of the covenant that was made with Abraham, and in the way of salvation. Unless we view and receive it in this sense we give it up as a matter of uncertainty whether it does or does not, and make it no more than an empty, unmeaning ceremony, or matter of perfect indifference whether it be retained, or banished from the Church. But we do not say that baptism is a pledge that the child as he grows up, will necessarily exhibit proofs of holiness in his life; or, in case he does not, that the Holy Spirit was not present to bless the sacrament. If we affirm either the former or the latter, we may run the pen across some of the baptisms performed by the Apostles of our Lord. We may be enrolled among the students of an eminent professor, but it does not, therefore, follow that we shall be good scholars. So, the Apostle could not mean that all the Roman and Corinthian converts were certainly pious and heavenly minded Christians, when he said that they were all baptized into the death of Christ, as many of them gave proofs to the contrary. Nevertheless, inasmuch as they were baptized into his death, and thereby put in the way of salvation, and should they continue to improve

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their privileges, would finally be saved, we arrive at the conclusion, that to be born again—to be regenerated—to be baptized into one body by one spirit, and to have been all made to drink into one spirit, did not mean real personal holiness; only the beginning of a new state, new life, and new relations. Being the commencement of a new state, through the virtue of a sacrament of God's instituting, which the Holy Ghost presides over and blesses, the change made thereby from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son, is, by the Spirit of God, styled a new birth. If Jesus Christ be present wherever two or three are met in his name, how can we suppose that the Holy Spirit is to absent himself from one of the sacraments of the Church in which he is said to dwell as in his temple?

The renewing of the Holy Ghost, or that moral change which he effects on the minds of believers, is a different thing, and advances by degrees as we grow in grace. The New Testament shews that some of the baptized converts were not renewed in the spirit of their minds, nor purified in their lives, while it declares positively, that as many as were baptized into the death of Christ, had put on Christ.—Rom. vi. 3.; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 27. There are no exceptions made. The language used includes all the baptized, good and bad. Simon Magus, and the incestuous Corinthian, were thus baptized, but the event proved that they were not renewed in the spirit of their minds. Christians are exhorted in the New Testament, to mortify the flesh, to crucify "the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," to abstain from all appearance of evil, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, but, having been once baptized, they are never exhorted to be born again.—Ephes. iv. 22; 1 Thess. v. 22; Tit. ii. 12. Wherever the new birth, or regeneration is mentioned, in connexion with believers, it is spoken of as past. This is the language of the New Testament, of the primitive Fathers, and of the Liturgy of our Church. We are taught to pray for an increase of all the graces and spiritual influences which God has promised to bestow, and which belong to the Christian char-

acter, but where are we taught to pray for a new birth, in the case of baptized persons?

The view which is here taken of baptism is of a very solemn character. It is the receiving of members, by a sacrament of God's appointment, into the body of Christ's flock. It, therefore, involves the deepest obligations. They are set forth in the baptismal office, in express terms, "renouncing the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the flesh;" openly professing to believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, together with all the articles of the Christian faith, as revealed in the Scriptures, and promising to obey the holy will of God, as thus made known, to our life's end. There is nothing here but what any idea we can form of professing to be the servants of a Holy God, must necessarily imply, God is holy, just and good. The devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. If we are the servants of the one, we cannot be the servants of the other. God is our Creator and Preserver. He, alone, has a right to our love and obedience. The devil is a deceiver, usurper, and destroyer. If, then, we think of serving God, we must renounce the devil. There is no compromise between them. Ye cannot serve two masters. The bare idea of serving God implies also, that we renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world; for there can be no fellowship between God and idols. Hence, it must be very manifest that he who objects to the renunciation that is made, and to the faith which is professed, and to the obedience which is promised, in baptism, is in the gall of bitterness, and in bondage to the god of this world. For no view that can be taken of a religion which claims God for its author can imply less.

Baptism, however, and all its obligations, is almost all lost. How many parents and sponsors forget its solemn renunciation, profession, and vows of obedience? How many of the baptized, after coming to the years of maturity, forget that the seal of the cross was put upon them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Hence the very slender hold that baptismal obligation seems to have upon the minds of many! Alas! too many of them, who, although they have been

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solemnly baptized, carry the marks of the devil upon them, and speak as if they not only did not belong to the Church by baptism, but had their religion yet to choose ! Much of the teaching now in vogue has the tendency of making baptism a dead letter. No consideration is drawn from it to enforce the duty and obligation of turning to a life of holiness. It is forgotten that the preacher has a hold on the consciences of the baptized. Indeed, this consideration has so long been abandoned, that its force is now denied. The very contrary has rather been taught. Though baptized, if they do not make a particular profession, the impression is conveyed that they have their religion yet to choose, and that they can do no better than to attach themselves to the party of whose interests he is an advocate. Things have come to such a pass that, notwithstanding the light and knowledge of which this age has to boast, to obtain a hearing to the Apostolic doctrines of the Church of Christ, is next to an impossibility. The hand of God, for our consolation, is not, however, shortened, and therefore, though so many now walk after the counsels of their own hearts, the time may not be far distant when refreshing showers from his presence shall revive his work. Until this come, may it be the prayers of all the faithful—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

CHAP. IX.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF INFANT BAPTISM,
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REN UP IN HIS ARMS, AND BLESSED THEM—FROM THE BLESSING
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AS IMPLYING THAT IF PARTICIPATORS OF THE HIGHER DEGREE,
THEY MAY, OF THE LOWER.

WHEN OUR SAVIOUR was upon earth, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."—St. Mark, x. 14. On this, our Church, in her baptismal office, grounds the following pious address to the parents and sponsors of the children that are brought to baptism:—"Ye hear in this Gospel, the words of our Saviour Christ, that he commanded the children to be brought unto him; how he blamed those that would have kept them from him; how he exhorteth all men to follow their innocency. Ye perceive, how by his outward gesture and deed, he declared his good will towards them; for he embraced them in his arms—he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." Surely, surely, this part of our Saviour's conduct, and the endearing declarations which he made on that memorable occasion, are neither appreciated nor believed: for how very few obey them! But few, indeed, bring their children to Christ, in baptism, that he may bless them. They argue that, as children cannot believe, they have nothing to do with religious ordinances. In opposition to this sentiment, as plainly as language can be made to embody the meaning of a speaker, our Saviour declares as commands that children should be brought unto him. They have, therefore, something to do with religious ordinances, and are susceptible of a blessing from God. But people do not believe the solemn declaration of the Son of God. If they did, they would hasten to obey. "I believed, therefore have I spoken."—Psalm cxviii. The unbelief of men, on the subject of Infant Baptism, has

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grown, and spread its baneful influence, far off and near at hand. It is not confined to Anti-Pedo-Baptists, who reject Infant Baptism from principle, but is found deeply rooted among many people who hold it in theory, but deny it in their conduct, by a neglect of their duty. The former say that children can have nothing to do with religion until they come to years of understanding: the latter shrink from their duty, either from carelessness, or from the fear of encountering the opposition of those who think differently. Jesus Christ, however, did not hold the language of Anti-Pedo-Baptists; for he was much displeased with the forbidding interference of his disciples, and commanded the little children to be brought. Adults have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, and are, therefore, commanded to exercise both their hearing and their understanding, and to come, but children are commanded to be brought. Now, I ask, what is there in the creed, or in the conduct of Anti-Pedo-Baptists, analogous to this example set before us by our Lord? Do they ever, in any instance, with respect to their children, perform an act that bears the least resemblance to that which our Saviour did and said to little children? I know of none. They forbid them. They frown upon and rebuke those that bring their children to the baptism of Jesus Christ. Infants, they argue, are incapable of grace, because they cannot believe. Hear the words of Christ, O ye faithless generation, and believe—"Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them and blessed them." The little child necessarily receives the "kingdom of God" as a helpless, unopposing being, without advancing any claim on the ground of faith, good works, or any thing whatsoever. Self-righteousness there is none. We, that are grown up, be we ever so wise or so holy, must come at all times, if we come at all, not trusting in our own righteousness any more than the new born child: for we have as little to recommend ourselves to the favour of an infinitely holy God as the little child. We are, indeed, much more unworthy, because, to the original depravity of our nature, we have added all our actual transgressions in

INFANT BAPTISM,
OR, THE BLESSING
OF HEAVEN,
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thought, word, and deed." Hence it will appear, as a just inference from the rejection of infant baptism, on the pretence that children have not faith, that we suppose ourselves endued with something meritorious, which they, by reason of their tender age, cannot have, and; therefore, make salvation, in some shape, to flow from works, not of grace, contrary to the gospel of Christ. But Jesus Christ received infants and also blessed them. They could have set up no claim whatever. As they received the blessing, so must we, and, therefore, boasting is forever excluded.

Jesus "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." The practice of the Anti-Pedo-Baptists opposes the word and the act of Jesus Christ.—"He blessed them," namely, little children. In their great wisdom and zeal for the purity of the Church, our brethren hold the opinion that infants are incapable of grace, because they cannot believe. The children that were brought to Jesus were as incapable of believing as our children are, and yet, our great High Priest "blessed them." May I now ask, what is there in the religion of the impugnors of infant baptism analagous to this? O! ye of little faith, blush at your unbelief; your worldly, grovelling, unspiritual, carnal reasoning! The victims of your carnal, earth-born views, are your own dear children. You say you do not neglect their best interests though you deprive them of their right to baptism. It may be you do not. We do not doubt but that you are faithful and diligent in the inculcation of such instructions as you conceive to be good. But, then, where is the least hint, in either the Old or New Testament, of coming to God but in and through the means of a divinely instituted ordinance? All divine ordinances, be it observed, are administered by God's appointed ministers. The Anti-Pedo-Baptists do nothing to their children that require their ministrations. Jesus received little children, but they refuse to present theirs. There are three distinct acts in what Jesus Christ did, which, though they are most endearing tokens of his good will to the lambs of his flock, are rejected by the Anti-Pedo-Baptists, from principle, and by those who neglect infant baptism, from carelessness. He took them

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 respond with this? He laid his hands upon them.
 Where have they any thing analogous to this? He blessed
 them. Where is the sign of seeking a blessing on their
 children in any act of their religion? No where. Private
 prayer for them cannot come under this head. Infant
 baptism exemplifies and applies the gracious condescen-
 sion of our Saviour. He has appointed ministers in his
 Church to preach the gospel—to feed both his lambs and
 his sheep. He promises to be with them always, even to
 the end of the world. "Now, then, we are ambassadors
 for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray
 you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—2 Cor.
 v. 20. An unbelieving world pays no attention to this
 sacred character of the ministers of Jesus Christ. They
 do not believe, that when they reject the ministers of
 Christ, they reject Christ himself—"He that receiv-
 eth you," says Jesus Christ, "receiveth me, and he that
 receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."—St. Math. x.
 40 "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that des-
 piseoth you despiseoth me; and he that despiseoth me des-
 piseoth him that sent me."—St. Luke x. 16. These pas-
 sages are now almost a dead letter. But few of even the
 professedly pious believe them. They are, nevertheless,
 the infallible words of Jesus Christ. If then the promise
 of Christ is true, that he actually is with his ministers,
 and that he views the treatment which they, and the
 gospel which they preach, receive from the world, as
 received by himself, it must be equally true that their
 ministerial acts, rightly and faithfully performed in his
 name, and according to his revealed will, are recognized
 by him as his own acts. Unless this be admitted, how
 can they be said to be his ambassadors? How can it be
 said—"He that heareth you, heareth me"? The minis-
 ters of Christ are his ambassadors sent to treat in his name
 with a guilty rebellious world. They preach what he
 has commanded them to preach. From him they have
 learned to take the tender lambs in their arms—to put
 their hands upon them—and to bless them. Who can
 say that Jesus Christ is not their master and teacher in
 these solemn acts?—Can they be wrong in following his

example? Are we not all required to learn of him? But it would seem that now to follow Christ is an error. As the acts of an accredited ambassador, performed according to his instructions, are ratified and confirmed by his Sovereign, so the baptismal acts performed by the ministers of Christ according to their commission received from God, and not from men, are ratified in heaven by the King and Head of the Church. In this faith, and in imitation of their heavenly master, they take the children up in their arms—put their hands upon them, and bless them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Ghost, and then receive them into the congregation of Christ's flock.

I know well that this doctrine is rejected by the Anti-Pedobaptists, and by all the careless in the land. But what have they in its place? They must own that it is a part of the ancient gospel of Christ, found both in the original Greek, and in all versions of the same, both ancient and modern. I should also think they would acknowledge that it is set forth in very plain terms—"He took them up in his arms—put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Who does not see that, without infant baptism, all this must stand in the gospel as a dead letter—as a law out of date, or repealed? But the repeal is no where to be found on record. As long, therefore, as it stands unrepealed, no reason can be assigned for the rejection and disuse of infant baptism, but only such, as the genius of infidelity will furnish. Were opposition to infant baptism found only among Turks, infidels, and converted heretics, we should not have so much cause to complain. But it is found amongst men who are otherwise, in many respects, faithful, pious, and devoted to the service of God. On the subject of infant baptism, they follow the disciples, although they were severely rebuked by our Lord. The impugners of infant baptism follow the disciples in the time of their unenlightened zeal, and not after they had received the Holy Ghost, and taught, as he directed them, "the promise is unto you and to your children." They call themselves disciples, or Christians, but in this they are not learners—they are not followers—they gather not with Christ—they actually scatter abroad. They are opposers—they affect to be

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masters, something more than teachers, and would remodel the gospel.

They ask what good will it do to little children to be baptised. O rebellion, worse than witchcraft, is it not enough that our Prophet, Priest, and King, said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Is it not enough to satisfy your scruples, and remove your prejudices, that he took them in his arms—that he put his hands upon them and blessed them? They see not, they say, how Jesus Christ would have blessed little children, seeing that they have no faith, and, therefore, they measure his power to bless by their ability to see. They think that children must first grow up, be able to express their opinions, and signify their assent, before even the King of Kings and Lord of Lords can make them recipients of his blessing; and, thence, by their carnal reasoning, they render the blessing of Christ pronounced on little children, although, beyond all comparison, the most endearing part of his ministry, a dead letter in the Book of Life; in direct opposition to his own most precious and amiable example; in contravention of his express command, as if his care of the lambs of the flock were of no higher nature than his providential care of our flocks and herds.

For my part, I view the conduct of our adorable Saviour towards our children as occupying the most amiable, sweet, and endearing portion of his ministry. His religion, which he came to promulgate and establish in the world, is, like himself, all love, goodness, kindness, and mercy, and, therefore, it cannot be that it passes over our children, as if they were the young of the beasts of the field, without leaving a token of his claim upon them.

See the tender mother, after having fulfilled her time, for the most part in pain, anxiety, and sickness, approaching the hour of severest trial, expecting to bring a child into the world, and perhaps at the expense of her life. Is she to be deprived of the promise of Christ to her child; for whom perhaps she is to die; and for whom she found, at all events, "trouble and heaviness"; and for whom she "called on the name of the Lord," saying, "O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul"? Is she, in

her painful situation to be denied the consolation of believing and relying upon the words of Christ, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?" As the case stands in the Gospel, she has the authority of Jesus to believe that her adorable Saviour has a tender eye upon the fruit of her labour. Though the woman was first in the transgression, yet, notwithstanding, pious mothers have the promise of a happy deliverance in child-bearing, "if they continue in faith, charity, and holiness, with sobriety."—1st Tim. ii. 15. Is it nothing then, that, at so critical an hour, a most precious, faithful promise should be snatched away from both the mother and the child? The promise is conditional, and, therefore, calculated to lead the mother to be most persevering in faith. "If they continue in faith, charity, and holiness, with sobriety." How greatly, then, is it to be lamented, that, instead of being encouraged "to continue in faith and charity," they are forbidden to believe the promise, and to indulge cruelty instead of charity! It is the spirit of cruelty to doubt that Jesus Christ has a tender regard for children. I cannot, indeed, find words to express my astonishment at the blindness which will not see the kindness of our Saviour to the children of his servants. People really act as if they thought it highly meritorious to believe that Jesus Christ did not want the new-born infant to be his child, but to remain a child of wrath; as if it were optional with them to keep him out of the fold of Christ, an unclaimed captive, or an uncared-for orphan. O how blind men are while under the influence of error! They follow those who forbade, though severely rebuked at the time, and not the Lord of Glory, who commanded the little children to come. "By his gesture and deed," says the baptismal office, "he declared his good will towards them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them and blessed them." This was not an embrace of mere natural affection such as a humane relative would naturally show. It was an expression of heavenly love, for "he blessed them." Here there was all the form of a spiritual blessing, the imposition of hands and the benediction. What was it

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then, but a solemn religious act? If infant baptism be rejected, it has no counterpart in the kingdom of Christ upon earth.

Christ receives young and old through the means of a divine institution. Every divine ordinance is administered by an authorised minister:—"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."—Heb. v. 4. Therefore, when the ministers of Jesus Christ take the children up in their arms at the baptismal font, and pour upon them the element consecrated by prayer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and then receive them into the congregation of Christ's flock, those acts ought to be considered as receiving the approbation of their Lord and Master, in whose name and stead they speak and act, and whose presence is to be with them in the ministerial functions especially, to the end of the world. Baptism is the only mode of receiving members into the visible Church of Christ:—"Except any one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Infants are excluded from baptism, and even if they are baptised, the Anti-Pedo-Baptists still persist in their opposition to the ordinance of Christ; and, what is more strange, some there are, nominally, Pedo-Baptists, who join the avowed opposer, and ask, "Who will shew us any good?"

If children are capable of a blessing when in the arms and under the hands of Jesus Christ, (and we see that he did bless them,) are they now less capable, or less in need, of a blessing when they are brought to the baptismal font, through the ministry of his servants, with whom he has promised to remain even to the end of the world? Is it, then, a presumptuous intrusion on the unbounded goodness of our Saviour, to believe the word which he has spoken, that, speaking of children, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus put his hands upon them and blessed them? Are we justifiable in putting a lower meaning on his words than that he conferred a spiritual blessing on them? If he did not, what did he mean? What did he confer? A kind compliment to please the parents? What! is our Saviour to be degraded

ed into the likeness of a weak mortal paying compliments? The Anti-Pedo-Baptist theory involves this degradation. If Jesus Christ, when he was on earth, took up little children, put his hands upon them and blessed them, is it not surprising that his example should be slighted—should be set at naught by those to whom it should be held as most precious—by fathers and mothers, with respect to their own children, the objects of their dearest, warmest affections? And if He was much displeased at the officious zeal of his disciples who forbade the approach of the little ones, can we suppose that he is less displeased with those who forbid them now?

How and in what manner Jesus blessed little children, and what blessing he actually did confer, I do not presume to explain. When their opponents shall explain how they are capable of being received into heaven, and what sort of enjoyment they have in that blessed place, considering that they have neither faith nor much reason, I will try and explain how they are capable of a spiritual blessing in their infancy upon the earth. If I do not understand how they are blessed, and to what degree they are blessed, on earth, while they are yet tender babes, it is, surely, not worse than to be ignorant of the manner of their blessedness in heaven. That "of such is the kingdom of heaven" we are assured by Jesus Christ. Is our ignorance of the manner of their blessedness, or of their capacity to be blessed, a proof that none of them can reach into the kingdom of heaven? Ye that ask what is the use of baptising infants, since they cannot believe, and cannot understand the meaning of baptism, ask what is the use of our Lord's declaration—"for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Small children, for lack of faith and a little understanding, would value heaven as they value their play-things—be pleased with them for a little while, and then throw them away. If you can explain how they are capable of glory in heaven, and that some of them are in heaven you cannot deny, then you may be qualified to answer your own question, and discover the use of baptising them, and of giving to those who are declared by Jesus Christ to have a place in heaven, a place also in his Church upon the

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earth. One would think that such as have a place in heaven when they die, might surely be allowed to occupy a place in the Church below. "For of such is the kingdom of heaven"; not so, says the Anti-Pedo-Baptist, of the Church below. But do you believe the words of Christ? Can you infer less from them than that, at least, some children are in heaven? You must admit this, or give a flat denial to the Lord of Glory. Now, can infants believe? Can they have what you call grace, faith, repentance, and zeal for God? Our Saviour said, in another place, "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." By what right do we presume to apply what Jesus Christ said of adults, of adults only, to infants? If He applied this rule to infants, he never would have said "of such is the kingdom of heaven." "You err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," when you apply one rule, while Jesus did not, to infancy, but to mature age. You must admit that infants are capable of heaven, while yet they have no faith when they die. If Jesus Christ, then, can bless infants in heaven, how is it that he cannot, or will not, bless them here? Is your faith of such extraordinary capacity, as to believe that he can bless little children in heaven, but cannot, or will not, do any such thing on earth? When he commissioned his Apostles to teach and to baptise, he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth."—St. Math. xxviii. 18. He can, therefore, exercise and manifest his power in both—in heaven above, and on the earth beneath. With those who reject infant baptism, there are many who comfort themselves with the belief, that such of their children as die in infancy go to heaven. I have no wish to deprive them of the consolation thus obtained, but merely observe, that the faith from which it is derived is a wonderful gift. Children admitted to heaven if they die, but shut out of Christ's kingdom when on earth, if they live! To live is a crime which must be paid with an exclusion from the footstool of God's throne—to die is a passport to glory! It boots nothing to speak of consistency, otherwise the question might be asked—How could we believe that a child, at death, was admitted

sible into heaven, but, if he lived, inadmissible into the Church—how he was capable of heaven, but incapable of grace here? What is glory in heaven but grace begun here perfected? Grace is glory begun, and carried on towards perfection in the Church below. When it begins to take effect who can tell? God has never made us his counsellors. Who can prescribe bounds to the Holy One of Israel, who is “wonderful in council, and excellent in working”? That we cannot understand how the father of our spirits may bless a little child, is no proof against it. It only proves our ignorance. We cannot understand the principle of natural life any more than we can the spiritual life. The life of an infant is beyond our senses, and, therefore, we believe it. The spiritual life is submitted to our faith; therefore, without faith it cannot be perceived. The strength or weakness of our perception does not, however, alter the fact. Jesus Christ did bless little children, and says of such is the kingdom of heaven; and if we cannot see how he blessed, or what blessings were actually conveyed and received—if we cannot see how it comes that “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” we ought, nevertheless, to remember, that He who said it has “all power in heaven and on earth” given him, which should lead us to pray—“Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief”?

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CHAP. X.

NO SCHEME OF RELIGION, WHETHER JEWISH, HEATHEN, MANOMEDAN, OR CHRISTIAN, EVER EXCLUDED CHILDREN FROM THE PRIVILEGES OF THEIR PARENTS UNTIL THE ANTI-PEDO-BAPTISTS AROSE IN MODERN TIMES.

THE INSTITUTION OF SPONSORS FOR THE CHILD IN BAPTISM. THEIR DUTIES ARE POINTED OUT IN THE TESTIMONY WHICH GOD GAVE OF ABRAHAM'S FIDELITY AS THE FATHER AND MASTER OF A FAMILY.

EVERY SOLEMN TRANSACTION, WHETHER CIVIL OR RELIGIOUS, REQUIRES WITNESSES. AT THE CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST PERSONS WERE PRESENT, BESIDES THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER OF THE CHILD, THAT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD SOMETHING MORE TO DO THAN MERELY TO WITNESS THE TRANSACTION.

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS AND THE OFFICE OF SPONSORS WERE IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH FROM THE BEGINNING. TERTULLIAN IS IMPROPERLY BROUGHT FORWARD IN OPPOSITION TO THE UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH IN HIS DAY. HE DOES, IN FACT, CONFIRM WHAT THE ANTI-PEDO-BAPTISTS WOULD FAINTLY HAVE HIM TO DENY.

It has been the manner of God's dealings with men in all ages, even before the flood, and afterwards, down to the advent of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to bestow the same covenant grants on the children of his people, according to their capacity, that he bestows on their parents: thus, the covenant which God made with Adam, Noah, and Abraham, comprehended their children also, as well as themselves, in their infancy. On this ground the children of the Jews were admitted into covenant together with their parents, and received its seal as an indelible mark in their flesh. The fact that God's covenant, under all dispensations—Adamic, Patriarchal, and Mosiac—comprehended the children together with their parents, and that there was a divinely instituted mode of confirming unto them their covenanting privileges, prove most strongly that children are not incapable of being the ob-





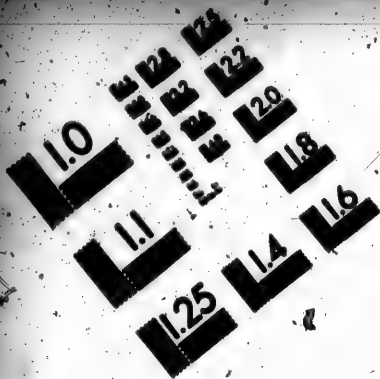
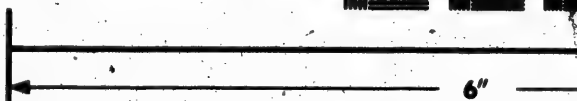
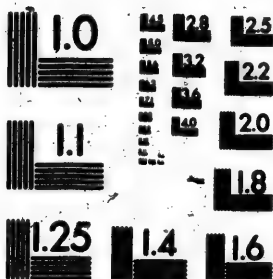
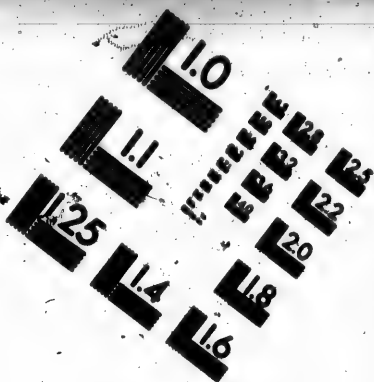


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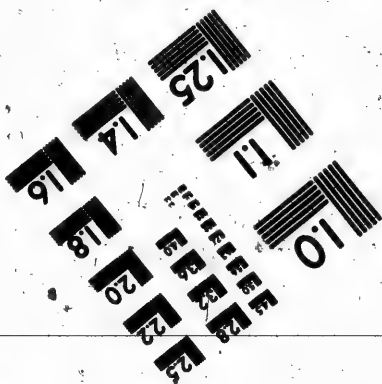


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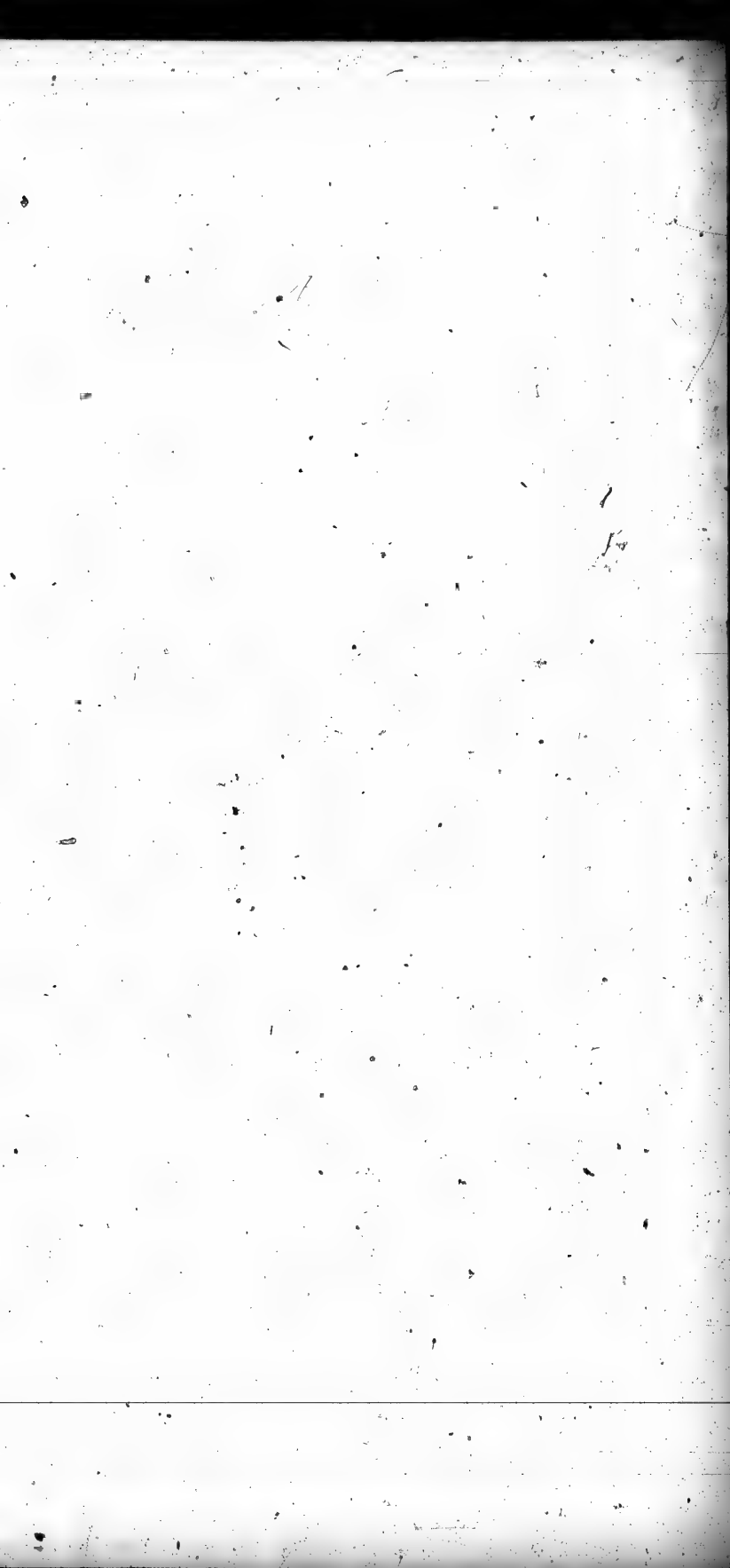
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jects and recipients of God's blessing. But if now, since the coming of Jesus Christ, the case is reversed, then the new dispensation of the Gospel, in the glowing language and splendid imagery of prophecy, always and every where represented as the last and the best, and the complete fulfilment of all the preceding dispensations, is truly defective in the most essential points, inasmuch as it cuts off from the fold of Christ the tender lambs of the flock. Until the Anti-Pedo-Baptists arose in modern times, no scheme of religion or legislation, human or divine, Jewish or Christian, barbarian or civilized, Mahomedan or Heathenish, was ever witnessed that excluded children from the rank and privileges of their parents. The primitive Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, in the day of her espousals, never suspected that her children born in lawful wedlock were to be cast out as bastards; but, on the contrary, relied on the promise as well to their children as to the parents, and on the sweet declaration of our Lord, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." This continued to be the universal belief of all the faithful in Christ Jesus, until some time after, or at, the reformation from Popery, men arose who brought in another order, never heard of before during the long period of fifteen centuries of the Christian era, calculated to render the commandments of God, to the full extent of their acquired influence, of no effect, through their inventions. "We have ye bereaved of my children," has been the just complaint of the Church for centuries past. Faith is the parent of her children, and faith having failed, her family has been proportionably contracted. It is from faith in the promise that the Church also expects the blessing. "Receive him, O Lord! as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son," that this infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. She entertains no doubt herself as to the performance of the promise towards the baptized infant, provided the proper means be observed. These means she insists on largely, in her address to the Sponsors.—*Budd*. Had the commission, "go ye, therefore,

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and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the
 Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," been de-
 livered under the law, the terms under which it is con-
 veyed would, most likely, have been the same as they are,
 with only the exception of one word, "baptizing," which
 would have been "circumcising." Adult converts had
 then to be taught the principles of religion, as well as now,
 before they were admitted to the privileges of the sanc-
 tuary. But, then, from the necessity of teaching adults,
 before they were admissible, we do not find that it was
 ever argued, as it is now by the Anti-Pedo-Baptists, that
 the circumcision of infants should be deferred until they
 were capable of being, and were, taught. The books,
 pamphlets, and religious periodicals that are published
 against infant baptism, insist upon it, that teaching, in all
 cases, without exception, must precede baptism. It is
 most strange how people will argue! They take as much
 pains to support this position as if it were denied and as-
 sailed by all the nations of the earth, and that it had no
 supporters but themselves. Now the fact is the very re-
 verse. It never was controverted at all. Every body
 knows that an adult person must be instructed and con-
 verted, before he has any right to be baptized. This was
 as necessary under the Mosaic Law as it is under the
 dispensation of the Gospel. The worshipper of strange
 gods could not be, and was not admitted until he had cast
 away his gods, and cleansed himself from idolatry. To
 effect this change in his views, and in his conduct, must
 surely have required instruction. But then infants were
 admitted to circumcision. The rule was not applied to
 them: for they were not more capable of being taught
 when they were eight days old than our children are.
 The New Testament, treating of the conversions of Jews
 and Gentiles to the Christian faith, shews that the same plan
 was universally followed by the Apostles. The converts were
 instructed and made "confession of Jesus Christ with the
 mouth unto salvation."—Rom. x. 10. Their conversion
 was the result of being taught of God. But had this any
 more to do with children in a state of infancy under the
 Gospel than it had under the Law? Children were left
 under the care, and subject to the privileges or privations,

of their parents as they had in times past. For, the children of parents already admitted, were commanded to be circumcised, and threatened with excision from the body, if neglected. Even Moses, so providentially saved from destruction in his infancy—so wonderfully provided for in the court of his people's grand enemy, and so signally favoured and honoured of God, in the sight of Pharaoh, and all his host, at the Red Sea—even He was in danger of losing his life for neglecting to circumcise his son, though his neglect had arisen from the scruples, perhaps, opposition of his wife. Is this a lesson that conveys neither warning nor admonition to us? For the same cause, it is to be feared that God has a controversy with thousands of the parents of our degenerate age.

When a child was circumcised, friends were present who took a part in the ceremony, as well as the parents. This appears to have been the case, from its first institution in the family of Abraham, who was commanded to circumcise every male child born in his house or bought with his money. In Gen. xvii. 10, the command is first given to Abraham in the singular number, but, in the next verse, it is changed into the plural. He was commanded to circumcise not only his own children, but, likewise, all that, in his establishment, were bought with his money. For the religious education of both, he, as the father and master of the family, was held responsible. It is evident that he stood in the capacity of, what we call, godfather, to the children that had been bought with his money and retained in his family; and hence it appears that sponsors are not peculiar even to the primitive Apostolic Church, but may be traced to a period much more remote, even to so venerable a source as Abraham, the father of the faithful. The duties of the office are distinctly recognized by Jehovah himself—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."—Gen. xviii. 19. Here God condescends to give a commendation to Abraham, which I believe stands without a parallel, at least I do not remember another instance like it.

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God declares his knowledge of what Abraham would do, namely, that he would teach "his children and his household after him." "Household," implies more than one's own children. Abraham circumcised his household, children that were bought with his money. For their religious instruction he certainly was responsible. God recognizes him in that character, and, in commendation of his fidelity, says, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him." Here then is a sponsor—a godfather, and Jehovah's high approbation of the office. But, if we reject infant baptism, we retain nothing analogous to this. If we are not under covenant engagements, respecting our children, as the Anti-Pedo-Baptists say we are not, then it follows, as matter of course, that we have no duties to perform. Say not that the law of nature binds us to instruct our children in proportion to our means and knowledge. I allow the arguments without hesitation; but if you, an opposer of infant baptism, allow or use it, then you esteem the law of nature as of more importance than the commands, and dictates and examples of revealed religion. You reject revealed religion in this instance, and have recourse to natural religion. One is the revealed will of God—the other, generally, is such opinions and prejudices as a man may happen to take up, and honour with the title of natural religion. The former is the sure word of prophecy, the other is a distant indistinct glimmering, which cannot illumine our path. But if we refuse to embrace the covenant of God, which recognizes children as parties thereunto, it follows that we are under no obligations, but such as nature dictates. Now, without recognizing divine revelation as the supreme standard in all things, whatever you may take for the law of nature is a blind guide, and will, in most cases, speak just as you wish. You are yourself, her priest and her oracle, and may, therefore ascribe unto her law whatsoever may suit your inclination. The total neglect of all religious instruction to the young, is sometimes called a simple following of nature, and where no other obligation is recognized, the young are not instructed in their duty to God. Now, there are religious parents who give all the advantages of school education

to their children that their means will allow. They take all the pains and care they can to qualify them for the duties of life, and to instil into their minds all the maxims and rules of prudence they know, to make them wise for this world—but there they stop. In the houses of such parents, not one of the children is taught to pray—none of them will kneel either at family or public worship; for they are carefully taught to believe, that until they feel themselves converted, any attempt to pray, or to join in prayer would be an abomination in the sight of God. No man can form an estimate of the evil which has sprung, in this country, from the error of not considering, and bringing up the young as within the embrace of God's covenant. The young are left to choose their religion, and being thus optional with them, they naturally improve upon this part of their fireside education, and never, to the day of their death, choose any. They follow nature, and that deity, as understood by most, never leads to God nor to heaven, but drives her votaries into the desert wilds of unrestrained inclinations, each bearing in his hand his own glimmering taper, lit, as he supposes, at the altar of nature, which is all the light he asks.

It has always been the custom, in every age and nation, required by both human and divine authority, that special witnesses be present at all solemn transactions, mere spectators I do not mean, but special witnesses who have some duties to perform. At the circumcision of John the Baptist, while every religious act was wholly Jewish, in conformity to the Mosaic ritual, special witnesses were present. "And it came to pass, that, on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child; and they called him *Zacharias*, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, not so; but he shall be called *John*. And they said unto her, there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table and wrote, saying, his name is *John*. And they all marvelled."—*St. Luke*, i. 59-63. The fact that special witnesses were here present, besides the father and the mother, is evident. Other persons, together with the parents, brought the child to be circumcised, who had

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more to do with the child, by virtue of their office, than they could have had in the capacity of friends or neighbours. If they had not, they could not have presumed to dictate anything about the child's name. But they named the child by virtue of their office, and such were their prerogatives, that they did not consult even the parents in their choice of a name, but followed the practice which generally everywhere prevailed, of giving a family name, and if a first-born son, as in this case, the name of the father. The mother, who knew the intimation which the angel gave, objected, saying that his name should be John. The friends, not satisfied with her interference, appealed to the father, who, on obtaining a writing-table, confirmed the decision of his wife, and they all wondered. Now, the language of this solemn transaction is too plain, to be charged with any degree of ambiguity. Compare it with the command of Christ, respecting little children: "They brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." The language is the same in both cases. There were special witnesses. We cannot assume that the parents of the "young children" were the only actors, because the text does not necessarily involve the conclusion that they were.

In all ages, and under all dispensations, witnesses to all compacts or covenants, whether human or divine, were required to be present, not merely as spectators, but as special witnesses recognized by, and acting in, the contract. It was so in the matter of circumcision. Even when a person in private, moved thereunto by some sudden sense of gratitude for mercies received, entered into covenant with God, as Jacob did at Bethel, in his flight from the wrath of his brother, he called upon the stones which he had erected into an altar, for lack of human evidence, to witness the sincerity of his vows.

"Baptism is not to be deferred but from necessity, after the first or second Sunday next after the birth. If the Jewish infant was introduced into the Church, on the

eight day after its birth, and received the sign and seal of the covenant; why is the heir of a brighter dispensation to be excluded from the earliest participation of its blessings, and of the interest, and love, and communion of that Church into which he is admitted? Nothing but necessity, therefore, is deemed by the Church a sufficient reason for withholding the infant from its bosom of grace, so soon as it is capable of partaking of the blessings of its communion."—*Budd.*

The same sentiments were held by the primitive fathers in general, and by Cyprian and Augustine in particular.

The whole Christian Church, from the beginning, practiced infant baptism. Sufficient evidence, in proof, has, I trust, been produced. The children of Christian parents were, everywhere, brought to Christ in baptism, and the persons who brought them were always their parents and their sponsors. The writings of the early fathers record it as the universal practice from the commencement of the Christian Church. The fact of infant baptism is never disputed, and as little that sponsors were present to answer for the child. Tertullian, who wrote a little more than a hundred years after the Apostles, has sometimes been cited to prove that infant baptism was an innovation; but when he is made to do so, the father is grossly slandered. There is no such thing in his writings. He merely says that it should be delayed, where there is no apparent danger of death, but does not say that it was contrary to apostolic order. "For," says he, "what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? because they may either fail of their promise by death, or they may be mistaken by a child's proving of wicked disposition." Two very important points are here proved:—1st, Infant baptism was the universal practice of the Church; and, 2dly, Sponsors and baptism went everywhere together. There is not a word in the above quotation, nor in the context, nor in any part of his writings, that speaks of infant baptism, or of sponsors, as an innovation on Apostolic practice. He pleads for delay, and that is all, on the ground assigned by himself in the above quotation. But if that be a reason for delaying

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the baptism of infants, it will hold equally good against the baptism of an adult, for we know not what he may do, any more than what the child will do, nay, man does not know what he may do or become, a short time hence, himself; and, therefore, Tertullian's argument for delay will apply to every case, and if good against infants, it is good against all; for we do not know what any of us may be tempted to do. Peter never thought that he could have denied his Master, and yet he did deny him. Hazael was indignant at the intimation which the Prophet gave of what he would do, and yet, for all his virtuous indignation, he did, when the time came, as the Prophet foretold he would. And, indeed, Tertullian himself extended his argument, and applied it to other cases, which would almost cut off from the Christian Church baptism altogether. Hear his own words:—"For no less reason," says he, "unmarried persons ought to be kept off, who are likely to come into temptation, as well as those that were never married, upon account of their coming to ripeness, as those in widowhood, for the miss of their partner; until they either marry or be confirmed in continence. They that understand the weight of baptism will rather dread the receiving it than the delaying of it. An entire faith is secure of salvation." It may here be observed, that those who claim Tertullian as their early supporter, do not follow but a small part of his doctrine—only that respecting infants, the rest they throw to the wind, as chaff. They pay no attention to his advice respecting unmarried persons, and those in a state of widowhood. But if his commendation be good in one case, it must be equally good in the other. This, however, would make a sad havoc in the list of candidates, and, therefore, must be discarded. Consistency would require to follow him out; for he is not more earnest and decided in one than he is in the other. Tertullian, however, was not more opposed to infant baptism than he was to the baptism of "unmarried persons," and those in a state of "widowhood." His opposition to both was precisely on the same principle, namely, that we did not know how either the one or the other should afterwards turn out. He allowed that, in case of "danger it should be administered presently.

in which case," he says, "it is so necessary that any one that is present (whether in orders or not, so he determines it,) ought to administer it, or else he is guilty of the person's ruin or perdition." Accordingly, he himself baptised a child that was dangerously sick. His own words are—"Let it suffice that thou make use of this power in cases of necessity; when the circumstance either of the place, or of the time, or of the person requires it; for then the adventuring to help is well taken, when the condition of a person in danger forces one to it; because he that shall neglect at such a time to do what he lawfully may, will be guilty of the person's perdition." Tertulian's arguments for the delay of infant baptism, serve to confirm the fact with regard to the universal practice of the primitive Church, as it regards both the baptism of infants and the admission of sponsors. They are both mentioned by him as matter of course, not in the way of explanation or opposition, but as facts known, practised everywhere, and nowhere opposed. In his pleading for delay, he stands a solitary monument of singular eccentricity. His errors, notwithstanding, are followed, and the pure limpid streams of the primeval fountain of truth are forsaken, to make room for broken cisterns of human invention, that hold no water. Hence it is, that much of what is now dignified with the title of evangelical religion, is as different from primitive piety as the fashionable and popular doctrines of the times are from "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

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CHAP. XI.

SPONSORS WERE CALLED GOD-FATHERS AND GOD-MOTHERS AT A VERY EARLY PERIOD OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. THEIR DUTIES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY SET FORTH AT LARGE.

THE OFFICE IS NOT ONLY SCRIPTURAL, BUT ALSO REASONABLE, COMENDABLE, AND FOUNDED IN THE DICTATES OF HUMAN PRUDENCE.

AS A MEASURE OF HUMAN PRUDENCE AND AFFECTION, IT IS FREQUENTLY ADOPTED.

THE Apostolic, primitive Church of Christ obeyed the commands, and followed the pattern which were received from the Prophets, the Apostles, and from Jesus Christ himself, the King and the Head of the Church, and, therefore, presented not only the children of the faithful to God, in baptism, but also required that the parents should be assisted by special witnesses, as an additional security to the Church that the child baptised should be brought up in the faith, to lead a Christian life. At a very early period, the witnesses were called God-Fathers and God-mothers, and, sometimes, Sponsors. The former denoted their spiritual relation to the child, as invested with the functions of spiritual parents, to impart instruction in spiritual matters. The latter denoted, as it literally implies, that they make answer for, and promise, in the name and behalf of the child, that he will renounce all the evil that Christianity requires of believers to renounce. They do all this in special conjunction with the natural parents. What is it to embrace the Gospel as a religious faith and rule of life, but to renounce evil, ungodliness, worldly lusts, iniquities of all kinds, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in a present world, and to look forward to a blessed state of immortality beyond the grave? If these, and to glorify God, be the design of the Gospel, in the case of adult converts, will it not follow, as a very natural consequence, that we will wish our children to partake with us in the same faith and hope? Can we ever partake of any

great benefits without wishing that our children should become partakers with us in our prosperity? Should any of you succeed to a great inheritance, where is the parent so unnatural and so inhuman as would leave his child to struggle under the privations of poverty and want, or, if young, without an education suitable to his newly acquired rank? But when we withhold our children from the baptism of Christ, we do spiritually what would be deemed inhuman in a worldly sense. As a portion of the Apostolic Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, the Church to which we, though unworthy, belong, baptises her children in their infancy, and in so doing, requires together with the parents, God-fathers and God-mothers to take upon them the obligations of the covenant for, and in place of the child. The Sponsors do not release the parents from their obligations, for they are already both naturally and religiously bound to the performance of their duty. The Sponsors serve as additional security to the Church that the duty shall be done.

The duties of the Sponsors are not merely nominal or ceremonial, but real and substantial. They are required to promote, as far as it may be necessary, in conjunction with the parents, the welfare of the child, by giving him such good instruction, advice, and admonition as may be found necessary to further his salvation. Where the parents themselves are faithful, pious, and do their duty as they ought, the Sponsors have less to do, and in such cases they do their part when they see and satisfy themselves that it is done. But, as I said that they are an additional security to the Church for the faithful performance of the obligations of the baptismal covenant, they have less to do when the parents are faithful, they must, however, be reminded, that they are not altogether relieved—they must continue to take an interest in their charge, and be satisfied that the child is brought up according to the promises and vows made in his behalf.

The baptismal engagements have already been set forth in the language of Scripture. In the office of baptism they are classed together under one view, and imply a renunciation, belief, and promise. "What did your God-fathers and God-mothers then for you? They did

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promise and vow three things in my name: First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." Now what is the use of any religion if it does not require the renunciation of all evil—faith in God and obedience to his will? And what is the use of professing to embrace it if we do not come under such obligations? If the Gospel did not insist on these obligations what could be its use or benefit to mankind? There are, indeed, we all know, many who seek a religion of indulgence, a religion of liberty to sin, rather than one which requires all kinds of evil to be renounced. Such persons pretend to esteem the Gospel very highly because they have unhappily conceived it to allow all the liberty which they desire, and to sanction the delusive imagination that there is no devil to renounce, no hell to fear, but a God all mercy and indulgence, without the attributes of justice and judgment, and, consequently, without regard to the moral state of men, to make a difference between the clean and the unclean, virtue and vice, and a boundless heaven to receive, after death, all men, good, bad, and indifferent—the faithful martyrs of the cross and their bloody persecutors—the saint and the sinner—him that feareth God and the blaspheming scoffer—the faithful servant of God and the polluted, daring murderer. The devil certainly worketh powerfully and successfully in the children of disobedience when he can thus, in the name of God's most holy word, put out the eyes of his credulous dupes, and so make them to believe that he himself, who is their commander and destroyer, has no existence, except in the imagination of the superstitious. But when they believe that the wicked fallen spirit that deceived our first parents in the garden—that tempted our Saviour Jesus Christ, in the wilderness of Judea—that instigated Judas Iscariot to betray his Lord into the hands of his avowed murderers for money—that tried to sift and bruise the bold, affectionate, and zealous St. Peter as wheat—that goes to and fro through the earth as a



roaring lion, or as an angel of light, seeking whom he may devour, has no existence except only in the breath of a name, they should be consistent, if consistency have a meaning, and renounce the Bible altogether. It is not the least of his wiles that the Bible is taken to prove that there is not a devil, nor a hell in which the wicked shall be punished, when it is one of the greatest designs of the Bible to prove that there is a devil, who is our powerful and vigilant enemy, and also a hell into which all the wicked shall be consigned at last, and that for ever, without redemption. That there is a devil, and also a hell for the devil and for his servants, are as truly a portion of God's word to reveal as that there is a God who made and governs the world. The "fool," then, who says there is no devil to renounce, nor hell for the wicked to dread and escape from, should also say there is no God to believe in, to love, serve, or obey. One is as much revealed as the other. The blessed book reveals the character, the attributes, and the works of both; and the Book of Creation and Providence which may be read by all men, displays the actions of both in the physical and moral world. The "fool," then, that believes there is no devil, will soon find—(there are between him and the discovery but a few short years at most)—will soon find, to his everlasting confusion and sorrow, that the devil can no longer keep him blind and unbelieving, but only until death. He can carry his delusions no farther, and I may add, that he will not seek to prolong them any farther. His purposes then shall have been fully accomplished. The Jewish rulers, no doubt, entertained Judas with very soft, fair speeches, until they had obtained their ends; but, when the unfortunate sinner came to feel the heinousness of his atrocious wickedness, and to declare unto them that he had betrayed innocent blood, and to throw down the money had and received from them for blood, at their own guilty feet, they exclaimed, with the malignity of demons, "See thou to it, what is that to us?" In that short history of human malignity, behold a faint shadow of the devil's treatment of his dupes, when he shall have finally secured them in his awful hell. He will then have no need of blindfolding them, and to con-

time what is needless he will not do. They may, therefore, expect that he will upbraid them for their folly.

There are many persons who suppose that the sponsors not only promise to instruct the child in the principles of the Christian faith, but that they also engage that he *shall* truly perform his duty, and be faithful, obedient and holy Christian unto his life's end. This cannot be the meaning of the vows and promises made in baptism. For, what the sponsors promise, and what the child shall do and believe, and how he shall conduct himself, are entirely different things. The parents and the sponsors can give instructions, but they cannot say, and do not promise, that the child will profit by them, and be a good man. Our baptismal office, we presume has a good, reasonable, consistent, practicable, and not a preposterous meaning. No man can be certain that a child, however well and piously he may be instructed, shall perform his duty after that he shall have grown to the state of manhood. They have only to do their duty, and leave the result with God. A well disposed sponsor may promise to give instruction, and if he live, fulfil his promise, by sowing the good seed, but it is God alone that can give the increase. It was never meant, far less expected, because it was never supposed to be in accordance with Scripture, or with the dictates of common sense, that sponsors or parents could answer for the future conduct of the child, even after doing their best. Evidently mistaken as this unfounded notion is, it has, nevertheless, deterred many well-meaning persons from consenting, in any case, to become sponsors, because they were led to believe that the undertaking involves an impossibility. And, except in the case of pious parents who have children to baptize, I confess that there is a difficulty, a real difficulty, especially when the child to be baptized belongs to ignorant, profane parents. In such cases, solemn duties, of vast importance, both for time and eternity, are required to be performed, and which, to undertake, no doubt, requires much faith and great charity and zeal on the part of those who undertake them. If they are neglected at the fireside, it is the more necessary that provision should be made for their performance by others; and what provision can be made ex-

cept by means of sponsors? If they are difficult, as all must allow them to be in the case of ignorant, profane parents, there is the greater demand on Christian zeal and Christian charity, that the bread of life may be imparted to the poor children who have but little chance of receiving it at home. It never should be undertaken as a mere matter of ceremony or form, but from a full knowledge of its vast importance, and from a firm resolution, that, with God's assistance, they shall act faithfully, and discharge their conscience before God. The meaning of the promise and vow is clearly set forth in the baptismal office, and is always declared at the baptism of every child, in the charge which is given to the sponsors.—“For as much as this child hath promised, by you, who are its sureties, to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God and to serve him; ye must remember, that it is your part and duty to see that this infant be taught (as soon as he shall be able to learn) what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly ye shall provide that he may learn the creed—the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer; and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe, to his soul's health.” Who can justly conclude, from these godly directions, that they mean no more than a mere form or ceremony, or that they contain any thing unscriptural or unreasonable? Who can point out any thing in them that should not be believed, received and practised? It is not genuine faith in God's words, nor ardent zeal for the purity of God's ordinances; that at all objects, but the lack of both. The duty set forth in the above charge may thus be divided:—First, as soon as the child is able to understand, he should be taught the principles of religion, according to his capacity. Children understand things, properly explained, sooner than many people are apt to suppose; and, being very inquisitive, their own inquiries, very frequently, lead the way to, and suggest, the instructions, of which they stand in need. Secondly.—They should be led to hear the Word of God, especially on the Lord's day: a day which they should be taught to

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keep holy—to consider as God's own day in particular, not to be spent in worldly labour or business of any kind. When that day is ushered in, they should be taught that, as God rested from the work of creating, so should they rest from labour and business and recreation, and devote themselves to such exercises of religion and piety as are calculated to prepare them for the enjoyment of an eternal Sabbath in heaven. They should then be led to the house of God, not to shew their fine things, if any they have, not to look about them, and see how other people look, but to join in prayer—to hear God's holy word, both read and explained; and when they return, their memories, understanding, and judgment should be exercised, by judicious questions put to them, in such a way as to elicit, or draw out, the progress they may have made, whether they may have been attentive or careless in their attendance. Occasion then should be embraced, as circumstances may seem to render necessary and proper, to advise, admonish, and gently guide their feet into the paths of a new life, following the commandments of God, according to the vows and promises made for them at their baptism. And, thirdly.—When they are arrived at a proper age, and well instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, they should be brought to the Bishop, that, before him, they may openly and publicly take the vows and promises, made in their names, at their baptism, upon themselves, and ratify them in their own persons, and receive the benefits of their Bishop's prayers together with the laying on of his hands. The first part of the charge, to a certain extent, is generally complied with in this country; for school education is almost general, and common to all, baptized and unbaptized. But school education is by no means enough, and too often, as a religious education, nothing at all. Children should be taught to understand the principles of religion as well as to read—the meaning of things as well as to pronounce words and answer questions by rote from memory. The understanding and the judgment should be cultivated as well as the memory—the heart and the affections as well as the head. And, therefore, in addition to school teaching and private instruction, “we shall call

upon them to hear sermons." Bring them with you to hear the Word of God, and to join in the prayers of the congregation. There is great need of stirring up the people of this country to the performance of this most important duty ; for it is every where lamentably neglected. It is a most beautiful sight to see parents and children going to the house of God together in company, and sitting together, as a devout family, hearing the word of salvation, or meekly on their knees, in the attitude of prayer to the throne of grace. Sometimes this sight is to be seen ; but, for the most part, where nothing leads to it at home, each one goes his own way on the day of rest, and but few, in comparison to the amount of the population, find their way to the house of God.

Youth, under the most favourable circumstances, require the benefit of instruction, advice and admonition ; because, it is confirmed by experience, that folly and wickedness are bound up in the heart of every child of our sinful race. Parents and sponsors, therefore, should diligently, zealously, and conscientiously instruct, advise, and admonish all such children as they have brought into covenant with God, and make them the subjects of their daily prayers. Baptism is a covenant between God and the baptized person. At the making of covenants, the persons concerned must be present, either in their own persons or by their representatives, to make mutual engagements to each other. In our mortal state, no man has seen God at any time, but, in condescension to our weakness, he has appointed the Ministers of his Gospel to assure us, in his name and stead, of the grace promised on his part in the covenant. The child, being incapable, by reason of his tender age, of answering for himself, is represented by his parents and sponsors who promise and engage in his name. Special witnesses, who thus answered, were at the circumcising of every child under the Jewish dispensation. The early history of the Christian Church shews that the same practice was retained and kept up under the Gospel. None can deny this that knows any thing of the history of the primitive Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. It is kept up, and practised, in the Lutheran Church, the eldest sister of the Reformation. Calvin, the father of Presbyterianism, confessed

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that it was the primitive order of the church. He also
 confessed the same of Episcopacy, and deeply lamented
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 ters, he could not get his Church of Geneva reformed on
 what he believed to be the primitive Apostolic, Episcopal
 order. Episcopal order, and all its peculiar characteris-
 tics were rejected by him, not from a conviction that it
 was not of divine institution, or from choice, but from a
 supposed necessity. No Bishop of his country was reformed,
 by whose ministry the succession might be continued ;
 but then, he might have obtained it from another coun-
 try, as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United
 States obtained it from England.

In the office and duties of sponsors what can we find
 unscriptural, unreasonable, and impracticable, or that
 ought not to be undertaken and done ? Nothing what-
 soever. The order has been set aside and opposed not so
 much from a conviction that it was wholly erroneous, as
 from a belief that it was a mere form or ceremony. Its
 opposers have too frequently seen it treated by its pro-
 fessed friends as merely a form, and, thence, concluded
 that it was of no use. As a mere ceremony I have no
 more to say in its behalf than they have ; because, as a
 mere ceremony, it is too solemn to promise in the name
 of God what is not seriously and faithfully to be per-
 formed. That it has been abused no man will deny ;
 but if every good thing that has been abused ought to be
 rejected, there is but little good that can be retained. He is
 not a good reasoner that concludes, because a thing has
 been abused it should, therefore, be thrown away ; for the
 argument which throws away a good thing because of
 abuse, will also throw away, in the course of a short time,
 the substitute that was adopted into its place. Poor sin-
 ful, human nature will not keep any thing long without
 some one to abuse it. The Gospel itself is more abused
 throughout the world than any thing else. Is that a rea-
 son that we should reject the Gospel because some pervert
 it ? The graces of the Holy Spirit have often been coun-
 terfeited in order to deceive. Shall we say that they are
 not to be desired nor cultivated in the heart, because they
 have been counterfeited and abused ? Few things, in-

deed, can we retain if the abuse of them by men is to be the test of their goodness. The proper remedy in the case is not rejection, but a returning to our duty. Restore the order or institution of sponsors to its original purity—fulfil its duties piously and faithfully, and then its beauty and advantages will be manifest. As a mere form it is nothing; but as means of giving instruction, advice, admonition, and warning, to youth, and exercising a kind, guardian care over them, it is of unspeakable importance. The duties that really belong to sponsors are not only scriptural, but reasonable. They accord with, and spring from the best feelings of our nature, and are, more or less, practised by all well-disposed persons; so that those who will not have sponsors in religion, will not scruple to have them on the principles of human prudence. Every parent sending his child away from home, whether it be to school, or service, or business of any kind, anxiously endeavours, so far as he can, to procure the good offices of some friend whom he can engage to take an interest in, watch over, counsel, and to encourage, the dear object of his tender care. Natural affection suggests this measure: prudence and wisdom cannot but embrace the suggestion as necessary, commendable, and safe. The dying parent is very often seen to bequeath, on his dying bed, the child of his tender love and anxious cares to a friend, with a request, rendered peculiarly solemn by the circumstances under which it is made, that he should take care of him, and bring him up as his own. In these cases, and in many others, natural affection for, and a deep interest, which death itself cannot destroy, in, our children, whom we cannot any longer cherish, prompt us to chuse and to make sponsors in our room, to supply our place so far as it can be done, first, when they are necessarily absent from us during our life, and still needing the watchful eye of a friend, and, secondly, when we find that we are going to leave them for our long home, and they are to be left behind to “weep o’er our dust.” In all such cases sponsors are really made at the suggestion of prudence, founded on natural affection and tender love to our children. The measure is good, cannot be objected to, but must recommend itself to every well regulated

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mind. Can the same be bad as a measure of religious
prudence? It would appear to me that those who ap-
prove of it as a measure of natural affection and worldly
prudence, but object to it as connected with religion, must
have arrived at the conclusion, that human nature may
sometimes suggest better modes of conduct than the reli-
gion of him who "shall feed his flock like a shepherd;
gather his lambs with his arms, and carry them in his
bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."
The office of sponsors is lamentably falling into disuse;
and this disuse has, for the most part, been caused by the
careless, thoughtless manner in which it has too often
been observed to be undertaken, and its duties, though
highly solemn and commendable, either slightly per-
formed or totally neglected, as if nothing had been pro-
mised.

CHAP. XII.

THE CONCLUSION.

Is Jesus Christ shewed his good will to little children, and manifested it so strongly as not only to command them to be brought unto him, before they could come, either in body or in mind, of their own accord, but to be carried by their parents or their sponsors—if he manifested so much interest in them as to take them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and bless them—if he said, on that very interesting occasion “for of such is the kingdom of heaven”—if he did, and said, so much in favour of the tender lambs of the flock, it cannot surely be a strained inference, or a forced conclusion, that he still continues to regard them as a precious treasure committed by him to the care of their natural guardians. This inference, naturally arising from the case, you must see opens to our view a wide field of peculiar interest and responsible duty. Our children are precious in his sight. “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” This declaration is true in every possible sense that can be attached to the words. It is not merely that those children who die in their infancy are graciously received into heaven, but that all such as pass through a state of infancy to a state of maturity in body and mind, and become his servants, promote his glory in the church, by doing good in their day and generation, and return to him at the end of their course, rich in faith, full of hope, and ripe for glory, honour, and immortality, have all been in a state of infancy before they were men. For, out of infancy have arisen all the men and women that now fill the world—all that now serve God on earth, and follow the example of Jesus Christ—all the glorified saints now in bliss—all the great congregation which no man can number, that shall be placed at the right hand of the righteous Judge in that great day of final account, and to whom he shall say, “Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.” What,

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then, will not admit that the state of infancy is most important in the sight of God and of his son Jesus Christ? And if it is so, our duties to the young are the most important of all human concerns, inasmuch as unto us is committed the bringing up and training of men and women to succeed us in the world—to succeed us in the church—to fill the mansions which the Son of God has prepared in heaven for all them that love and serve him. To show his regard for infancy—the cradle of the world, of the church, and, in fact, of heaven—he took children up in his arms. Is it too much to say, that by this act he claimed children as his own, and, as his own, made provision for their religious education, as subjects of his kingdom? Are children, then, on whom Jesus Christ laid his hands, and whom he took up in his arms, next to his bosom, the seat of affection and love, and of whom he declared that “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” to be forbidden to come unto him in the only way they can come? He is not personally on earth. If, then, they come unto him, they must come through the means of a religious ordinance. Are they viewed by Jesus Christ as candidates for heaven, and by men forbidden to enter the threshold of his church? Ah! my brethren, those who keep them out, and forbid them to be called after his name, act the part of a hard-hearted step-mother, and not the part of a mother in Israel.

When Jesus Christ laid his hands upon, and blessed little children, he conveyed by these significant signs, the most important commands to parents. He claimed these children as his lawful heritage. To the parents they are only lent. With the loan, they are commanded to bring them up for him. The command of Christ creates an obligation on our part to obey, and as it respects our dear children, the obligation is not grievous but pleasant and agreeable. Of children Jesus Christ fills his church with those that are his peculiar people, zealous of good works, and heaven with adoring saints. To parents and sponsors, then, Jesus Christ commits the nurture of his flock, commanding them to bring them up for him. Our church, built on the holy scriptures, and on Jesus Christ himself, the chief corner stone, understands the charge in

this sense. As Jesus Christ left no state of manhood uninstructed and unblest, so the church, following his steps where he led, blesses, and prays for, all the relations of life. Christ was present at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The church solemnizes the covenant of marriage, joins the couple together as man and wife, with prayer to God for a blessing on the union, and on children, the fruit thereof, that they may be for the increase of his kingdom. At their coming into the world Jesus claims them, and the parents present them at the baptismal font, as his. Provision is then made that they may be "Christianly and virtuously brought up." She pursues this pious course through life, never leaving them, unless they leave her, until finally she commits them to the grave, in "the hope of the resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That "godliness which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," runs through the whole of the church service from beginning to end, and in no part more pure and conspicuous than in the baptismal office. "Doubt ye not, therefore," says that admirable formulary, ye parents, sponsors, and congregation, in whose presence the child is brought for baptism, always in public and never in private, should this holy sacrament be solemnized, except in cases of necessity; and if people had a zeal for God according to knowledge, they never would consent to have it concealed in the privacy of a chamber. "Doubt ye not, therefore," since you see that Jesus Christ received and blessed little children, "but earnestly believe that he will favourably receive this present infant." If ye bring him in faith, as the pious Hannah brought her child Samuel, the child of many prayers, to the Lord in the temple, he will not reject your offering. Be rather assured, that as he did of old, so will he do now. The exhortation in the baptismal office, to which I am calling your attention, is strictly, in spirit and meaning and language, in unison with the spirit and language of the Gospel. It is really astonishing that a book so truly in the spirit and language of the pure Gospel as the Liturgy of the Church confessedly is, should not be held in greater estimation than it is by professing Christians. The bap-

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tismal office, wholly concerning the objects of our dearest, tenderest affections, our children, for whom we ought to travail night and day in prayer to the throne of the Most High, until Christ be formed in them the hope of glory, is the most extraordinary in point of close union with the spirit and design of the Gospel, and tender regard for the objects of our dearest attachments, that can be found next to the Book of Divine Inspiration. "Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that he will favourably receive this present infant." The exhortation is a legitimate, logical inference from what Jesus Christ said of, and did to, little children, in the days of his tabernacling among men. Now that he has shed his blood for sinners, and is exalted at the right hand of the Father in glory, as the reward of his mediatorial sufferings and death, and naturally desirous that he may "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," who can doubt his willingness to bless our children, if we pray for them, and do our best, in reliance on his gracious promise, to bring them up in the knowledge of his will? "Wherefore," pursuing the same train of godly exhortation and encouragement, "we," ministers, parents, sponsors, and congregation present, "being thus persuaded of the good will of our Heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by his son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this infant to his holy baptism; let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks unto him." You that are parents, even if you do deny to your children the baptism of Christ, take, I beseech you, the baptismal office in your hands—lay aside prejudice—peruse it with serious attention and faithful prayer; and if you love a religion that bears a friendly regard to your children—if you love the simplicity, purity, and sanctity of heavenly love and truth, you will rise from the pleasing task with feelings, desires, and resolutions, which, through the blessing of God, will lead to a happy issue.

The baptismal exhortation insists on the promise of God, as the foundation and means of any benefit to be secured to the child by baptism. "The promise," says the Apostle, newly filled with the Holy Ghost, "is unto you

and your children." How comes it that so many reject the promise of God to their children? Why do they explain it away as if children were actually excluded, and not embraced, by it? God, on his part, will most surely keep and perform it. But if we do not bring them, and by bringing them not, refuse or neglect to claim his promise, how can we ever expect to realise the benefit of his promise? Our unbelief can exclude us from the kingdom of heaven, as it excluded the generation that God brought forth out of the land of Egypt from the land which floweth with milk and honey, but it cannot falsify the promises of the Most High. His promises stand forever sure, but they are not to be fulfilled unless we, on our part, comply with certain conditions on which they depend. Hence the baptismal office proceeds to instruct the parents and the sponsors in the conditions with which they have to comply. Putting them in mind of the spiritual blessings for which they had just been praying, and of the promise on which their prayers and their faith are founded, the great principle which pervades the whole service in general, and the baptismal office in particular, is clearly insisted upon, namely, that all blessings are grounded upon and flow from the Gospel, and not from the Law—that God's mercy, goodness, and love precede the child's engagement to obedience and a holy life—that obedience and a holy life are to flow, in due time realised, from a sense of the pardoning mercy of God. "Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ"—this promise is unto you and your children—and of such is the kingdom of heaven—"this infant must also faithfully for his part, promise by you that are his sureties, until he come of age, to take it upon himself, that he will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's Holy Word, and obediently keep his commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life." I cannot see how the Christian's engagement can be less than it is here expressed. If the Gospel do not imply, require, or command this renunciation, I cannot conceive what it is good for. Can men serve God and the devil? Can they be zealous for the Lord God, and for the spirit that now "worketh in the children of disobedience?" Can they

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love darkness and light at the same time? Can they love Christ and his enemies together? If parents seek the spiritual good of their children, what less should they ask for, or should satisfy them, than a renunciation of the devil and all his works? Can they, or ought they, to be satisfied with any form of religion, that requires, or is satisfied, with less? Are they seeking the kingdom of heaven themselves, and can be so unnatural as not to seek the same for their children? If their piety and godliness be indeed from above—if they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and his favour better than life, they cannot for one moment hesitate to promise, that, with God's assistance, they will use their best endeavours to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, which, in reality, is the same as to "renounce the devil and all his works." And being thus persuaded of their duty, and willing to perform it, as all Christian parents and sponsors ought to feel, they promise and answer in the name of the child. The minister then, after the example of Christ, takes the child out of their hands into his own, pronounces over him the name which his Godfathers and Godmothers gave him, and pours upon his head the water of baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, impressing on his forehead the sign of the cross, as a seal of his adoption into the family of the redeemed, and as a "token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified." How any one that wishes to lead a holy life, or that wishes his children ever to be received into the kingdom of heaven, can find fault with this engagement, or be satisfied with any less, I cannot see. The expressions are so rich that a godly person surely does not wish to see them altered. As they are, they are admirably qualified to awaken our minds to a sense of duty and gratitude. When the baptism is performed, the parents and sponsors are dismissed with a solemn charge on the subject of the child's education. The charge is brief but full of meaning, and yet plain, easy to understand and to remember. A modern treatise on education may enlarge on this, but cannot improve it. The brief hints which it contains embrace all

that we can know of God, and all the duties which, as parents and sponsors, we owe to the young, on the all-interesting subject of a religious education, the faithful performance of which is the most important, in its consequences, that we can conceive. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The most pious man or woman on earth was once a child. His piety, wisdom, learning, or any other excellency that made him useful in the world, had, under God, some beginning at the fire side of his parents, the first school, and, in its effects, the most lasting school of all mankind. "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd." At the fire side every man has received the seed which, in after life, tended to make him useful, or a nuisance in society. For the most part, though not always, the germ is planted in the heart of the child at the fire side, and takes root in the morning of life, that tends upward to heaven, or downward to hell. You have seen, then, O fathers and mothers, what an important situation you fill. How important it is that you should feel the responsibility of your situation! To your own prayers, in which you should never faint—to your instructions and admonitions, which you should never withhold, you are to call upon the tender objects of your solemn charge "to hear sermons." In the hearing of "sermons" they join with the congregation of Christ's flock, into which they were received as members of Christ, in Christian communion, and receive further instruction in righteousness, from God's ministers, which, through the blessing of God, will make them wise unto salvation.

Not to pursue this interesting subject any farther, and swell my tract into an inconvenient size, I will now conclude by addressing myself more particularly to the young who have been baptised. My young friends, you have been received into the congregation of Christ's flock by the true baptism of Jesus Christ. Your parents and your sponsors promised and vowed certain things in your names which are of the greatest importance for you now seriously to consider, weigh, and understand. Some of you have since ratified and confirmed them in your own persons before your Bishop, agreeably to Apostolic practice, and took them upon yourselves. I hope you did this

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"with true hearts with full assurance of faith." But suffer me to deal with you truly, affectionately, and faithfully, as one who careth for your souls. Youth is not distinguished for serious thought and steadfastness of purpose. Your baptism will not save you, unless you follow Christ and bring forth in your lives the fruits of faith and holiness. In the meantime, you must remember that you were born in sin—that you have evil hearts of unbelief, ready to depart from the living God. Your minds are easily captivated with the glare and tinsel, the pomp and vanity of this deceiving, wicked world, and, therefore, you are under strong temptations to forget the vows and the obligations that are upon you. To keep you mindful of your duties and high privileges, you have heard the good will that Jesus Christ shewed to little children—that he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon, and blessed them. Remember that he did this as the Saviour and Redeemer of little children. If so, then he virtually took even you in his arms and blessed you; and, therefore, the little children whom he actually took up, represented all children. But I need not say that he virtually took you up, when he took them, as it would apply to all unbaptised children as well as to you; for he took even you in your baptism. The minister that baptised you represented Jesus Christ. "We then are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that despiseth you despiseth me." The ministerial acts of the ministers of Jesus Christ, performed according to his will, are, therefore, received or rejected by the hearers as the acts of Christ. Consider, then, that you, having been thus received into the body of Christ's flock, are under the greatest of all obligations to be his faithful soldiers and servants, by manfully confessing the faith of Christ crucified, and to walk worthy of your high calling all the days of your life. Suffer no one to beguile you, by allowing them to persuade you that the vows of God are not upon you, but that you are yet free for them first to strip you of your religious profession, and then mould

you into any form of doctrine they please. Let it be your daily study, and prayer to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, remembering that if Jesus Christ loved little children at their first coming to him in baptism, his love cannot be supposed to have been confined to that hour. "I love them that love me," says your heavenly Father, "and those that seek me early shall find me." This promise is to such as you, young in years; see that you will come under the other qualification, that you "love" him. I am persuaded that no sight is more delightful to the angels of heaven, than that of youth endeavouring, through the assistance of the Divine Spirit, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and seeking to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and that no prayer is more acceptable before God, than the humble, faithful prayer of the youthful heart. This appears to be far above the aid of conjecture, from the history of the shepherd King in his youth—from that of Solomon, when he began to reign, and from that of Josiah. Seek the Lord, then, in the morning of life, before your hearts become hardened by the deceits and vanities of the world. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the business and cares of the world engross and harden your hearts. Believe not that you have time enough before you, or that you can fear and love God too soon. Believe not that religion is to make you mournful, and your life unpleasant. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. If you cultivate, and walk in her path, you must remember that it is both your duty and your privilege to approach the Table of the Lord, and eat of that bread and drink of that cup, which do shew forth the Lord's death until he come again. When you are told that it is yet too soon, tell them that it is neither too soon for any one to obey the dying command of our dying Lord, nor too soon to die: and when you come, see that you have on the wedding garment, and that you be careful how you soil it, in your intercourse with the world, afterwards.

There are others, not a few, of the youth of the land who attend preaching, and take part in the prayers of the congregation, but are not baptized. If, my friends, the

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seal of Christ was not put upon you, by baptism, in your infancy, the fault was not, surely, yours. But now you are grown up—you have, many of you, been highly favoured, by having the Word of God in your hands, by hearing the Gospel, and, therefore, if you ratify and confirm the unbelieving spirit that kept you from baptism, by continuing the disobedience that was then begun for you, the sin is your own; it lies at your own door. Those that neglected or hindered your baptism are under the rebuke of Christ, and to him they have to answer for their conduct. You have now to answer for yourselves, and you are old enough to consider your ways. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." If you be ashamed of Christ before men, he will be ashamed of you before his Heavenly Father. Your refusal, or shame of him, will not hurt Christ; but if, as a just retribution, he will be ashamed of you, it will hurt you forever. Every day you suffer to pass by, without coming to Christ, is a loss that cannot be repaired. To delay, therefore, is most dangerous. If you die without Christ, you die in your sins, and hell shall be your portion. To-day, if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. To-morrow, it may be too late. The fatal shaft may pierce you to the heart, and number you with the dead. To-day, then, if you love your souls, choose life rather than death.

Finally, remember, you that have been baptized, that neither your baptism nor any thing else will save you, without holiness of heart and life. It is not the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience that will avail you in the day of the Lord. If, then, you have taken the name of Christ upon you, the Church has a right to expect—your Ministers have a right to expect—the Word of God demands it, that you walk worthy of your high calling, and not be tossed to and fro, as the waves of the sea, with every wind of doctrine, but to stand strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, as lights which cannot and ought not to be hid.

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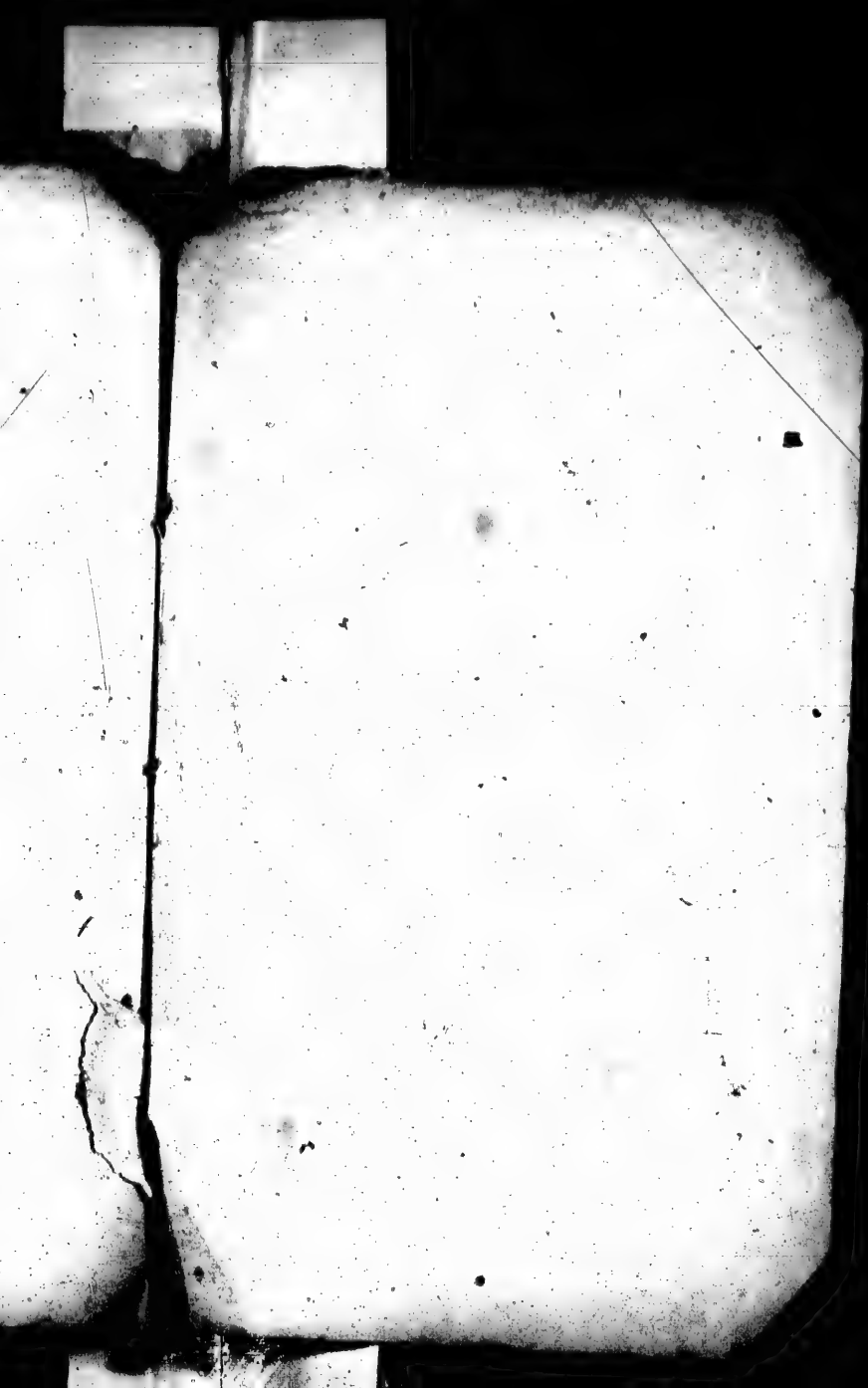
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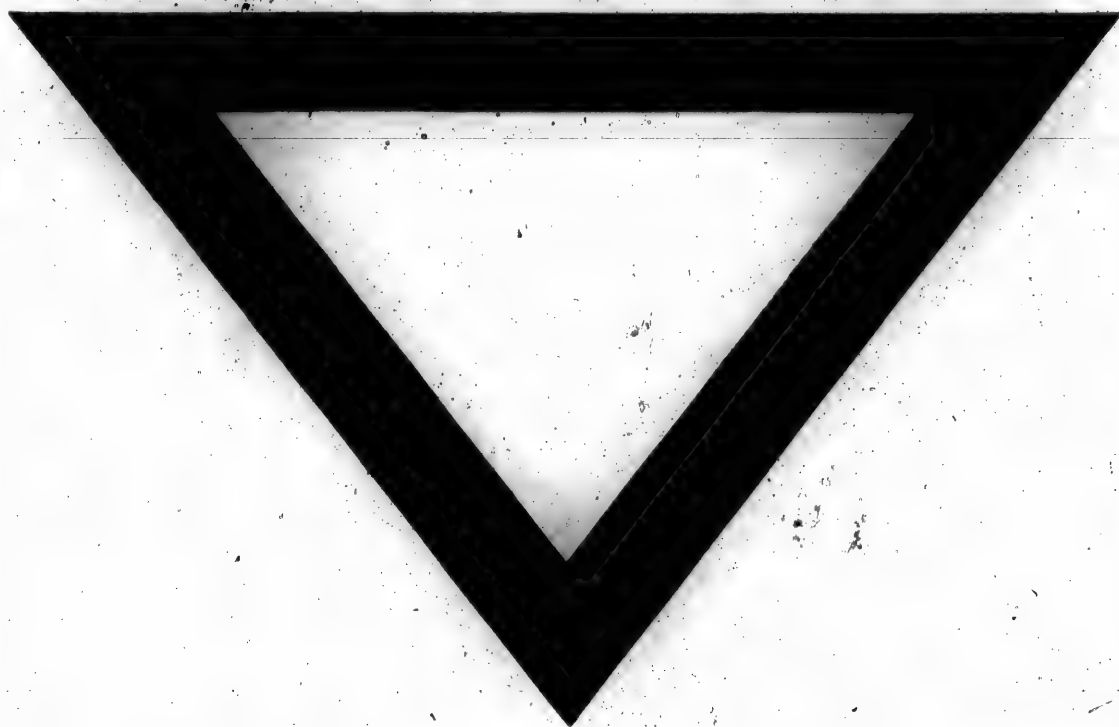
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ERRATA.

Page 8, line 8, *del* "them."

- 10, 18, for "wherein," read *who. con.*
- 17, 15, for "words," read *word.*
- after "deny," supply *it.*
- 20, last line but one, *erase* "to."
- same line, for "maketh," read *making.*
- 25, for "infants," read *families.*
- 30, line 19, for "Fidius," read *Fidus.*
- 34, 4th line from bottom, *erase* "them."
- 41, line 21, for "he," read *we.*
- 46, 28, for "terms," read *term.*
- 47, 35, for "clean," read *unclean.*
- 49, 34, for "Maimonicles," read *Maimonides.*
- 52, 33, for "baptizo," read *baptizo.*
- 56, 31, for "propositions," read *preposition.*
- 73, 15, for "those," read *these.*
- 82, 29, for "converted," read *convicted.*
- 85, 43, for "those," read *these.*







Handwritten text, likely a signature or name, written in a cursive script. The text is dark and appears to be ink on a light-colored background. It is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

